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#METOO MOVEMENT IN ESTONIA: A FRAME ANALYSIS

MA Thesis

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Tartu 2019

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this thesis have been referenced.

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#METOO LIIKUMINE EESTIS: RAAMANALÜÜS

Kaidi-Lisa Kivisalu

Resümee

2017 aasta oktoober tõi endaga kaasa uue seksuaalse ahistamise ja seksuaalse vägivalla vastase liikumise sünni. Seoses suure ahistamiskandaali paljastamisega Ameerika Ühendriikide meedias, ärgitati naised sotsiaalmeedias jagama oma isiklike kogemusi seksuaalse ahistamise ja vägivallaga, kasutades teemaviidet #MeToo. Antud sotsiaalmeedia kampaania levis väga kiiresti, alguses USA-s ning seejärel üle maailma, „trendides“ 85 riigis. Kajastus #MeToo liikumisele erines riigiti: USA-s marssisid tuhanded inimesed seksuaalkuritegude ohvrite toetuseks, Rootsis võeti vastu seadus, mis kehtestas, et selge nõusolekuta vahekord on vägistamine. Siiski paljudes teistes riikides piirdus liikumise mõju laiapõhjalise meedia kajastusega. Kuigi Eestis ei järgnenud #MeToo liikumisele sotsiaalsete liikumistele tavapäraseid aktsioone nagu protestid või petitsioonid, leidis liikumine siiski märkimisväärset meedia tähelepanu. Seetõttu oli antud uurimuse eesmärgiks analüüsida avalikku reaktsiooni #MeToo liikumisele Eestis. Töö on oma eesmärgilt aktuaalne, sest seniseks on käesolevat liikumist vähe uuritud, ja tegu on üpriski värske liikumisega ning lisaks käsitlevad kõik olemasolevad uuringud Ameerika Ühendriike.

Uurimustöös püstitati kaks kesket uurimusküsimust: kuidas raamistati #MeToo liikumist Eesti meedias ja kuidas raamistati #MeToo liikumist Riigikogus. Varasemad tööd meedia raamistamise ja sotsiaalsete liikumiste teemadel viitavad sellele, et sotsiaalsed liikumised võivad kogeda tugevat vastupanu meedialt ja ühiskonnalt „protesti paradigma“ ja „nuhtluse paradigma“ tõttu, mis muudab meedia kajastuse liikumise kohta negatiivseks. Lisaks on märgatud, et feministlike liikumisi, mis üritavad muuta soorollide ja -identiteetide hetkeseisundit, raamistatakse sageli negatiivselt meedias ja ühiskonnas üldiselt. Teoreetilisest raamistikust lähtudes püstitati hüpotees 1. #MeToo liikumist raamistatakse meedias negatiivselt. Kuna poliitilised jõud ei reageeri soosivalt liikumistele ja teemadele, mida on meedias kajastatud negatiivselt, ja Eestis puudub üldiselt tugev protestikultuur ning naisliikumiste ajalugu, siis sellest lähtudes püstitati hüpotees 2. Poliitiline eliit ei reageerinud #MeToo liikumisele.

Esimese hüpoteesi testimiseks koguti kolmest mainekast uudisteallikast (Postimees, Päevaleht ja ERR) 112 arvamust, mis olid avaldatud perioodil oktoober 2017 kuni detsember 2018. Raamanalüüsi tulemused näitasid, et püstitatud hüpotees osutus valeks. Üldiselt oli suurem osa antud ajavahemikus avaldatud arvamustest positiivsed #MeToo liikumise suhtes. Kuus diagnostilist raami leiti analüüsi käigus: ohvrisüüdistamise raam, küsitavate motivatsioonide raam, võimudünaamika raam, toksilise maskuliinsuse raam ja flirtimise lõpetamise raam. Need raamid üritasid selgitada välja peamisi põhjuseid, mis võivad viia seksuaalse ahistamise ja seksuaalse vägivallani ning peamisi süüdlasi selliste aktide puhul. Kaks kõige levinumat raami (ohvrisüüdistamine ja küsitavad motivatsioonid) tõid välja, et peamisteks põhjusteks, miks ohvrid ei soovi juhtunust rääkida on hirm, et neid hakatakse juhtunust süüdistama või et nende motivatsioone hakatakse kahtlustada. Võimudünaamika raam leidis, et seksuaalse ahistamise põhjuseks on asjaolu, et võimupositsioonidel olevad inimesed kasutavad ära nende alamaid. Toksilise maskuliinsuse raam leidis, et range stereotüüpsete soorollide järgimine võib tekitada negatiivseid käitumismustreid nagu misogüüniat. Flirtimise lõpetamise raam leidis, et seksuaalne ahistamine võib tekkida möödärääkimisest flirtimise tasandil ja et #MeToo liikumine võib endaga kaasa tuua flirtimisele lõpu. Analüüsi käigus leiti ka prognostilise ja motiveeriva raamimise kombinatsioon vaikimise lõpetamise raamis. Nimelt prognostilise raamistamise mõttes, leidis eelnimetatud raam, et lahendus seksuaalsele ahistamisele ja vägivallale leidsuks teema ignoreerimise lõpetamises ja sellest rääkimises. See aitaks vähendada sotsiaalset tabu ja tekitaks ohvritele võimalusi abi saamiseks juurde. Motiveerivast raamimisest leidis perspektiiv, mis julgustas ohvrid jagama oma lugusid, kuna see võiks ära hoida sarnaseid juhtumeid tulevikus.

Teise hüpoteesi puhul rakendati raamanalüüsi parlamendi istungite stenogrammidele. Töös valitud ajavahemikus toimus Riigikogus 197 istungit, millest mitte üheski ei leidunud otseseid viiteid #MeToo liikumisele. 13 istungis leidis viiteid liikumisele lähedastele teemadele nagu koduvägivald või ahistamine. Kokku leiti nendes 13 istungis 80 individuaalset sõnavõttu, mis puudutasid liikumisele lähedasi teemasid. Tulemused näitavad, et Riigikogus puudusid selged raamistamise katsed diagnostilisel, prognostilisel või motiveerival moel. Ainukene juhtum, kus võib näha kaudset liikumise mõju poliitilistele protsessidele, oli Justiitsminister Urmas Reinsalu umbusalduse hääletusel

(24.01.2018). Seega saab järeldada, et #MeToo liikumine saavutas meedia tähelepanu, kuid poliitilises maastikus jäi liikumise mõju olematuks.

Abstract

A new social movement was born in October 2017. In light of a high-profile sexual harassment scandal, women took to various social media channels to share their own stories of sexual harassment and violence using the #MeToo hashtag. The viral nature of the #MeToo movement saw its rapid spread to various other countries, Estonia included. The aim of this thesis was to analyse the response to the #MeToo movement in the Estonian media and political sphere. Two central questions were raised: how was the #MeToo movement framed in the Estonian mass-media and how was the movement framed in the *Riigikogu*. Informed by Snow and Benford's work on framing and social movements, frame analysis was conducted on opinion pieces collected from three news sources and minutes to the parliamentary sittings. While the theoretical background may suggest that social movements can face serious negative framing due to protest or nuisance paradigm, the findings show that the movement was framed mostly positively in Estonian mass-media. Yet, regardless of the positive media coverage, no attempts at framing the issue was found in the *Riigikogu*, hence it can be said that there was no significant political reaction to the movement.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	9
2. Theoretical background.....	12
2.1. Women's social movements	12
2.2. The #MeToo movement	17
2.3. Social movements, framing and public reaction	20
3. Methodology and Data	28
3.1. Frame analysis	28
3.2. Overview of Data	29
3.3. Coding	36
4. Results	38
4.1. Diagnostic framing of the #MeToo movement.....	40
4.1.1. Victim blaming frame.....	40
4.1.2. Questionable motivations frame.....	44
4.1.3. Power dynamics frame	48
4.1.4. Toxic masculinity frame	50
4.1.5. End of flirtation frame	51
4.2. Prognostic and motivational framing of the #MeToo movement	53
4.2.1. Breaking the silence frame.....	54
4.3. The political response to the #MeToo movement.....	60
5. Conclusion.....	67
Bibliography	70
Appendix 1 – List of articles (Postimees)	74
Appendix 2 – List of articles (Päevaleht).....	85
Appendix 3 – List of articles (ERR)	89

1. Introduction

2017 saw the beginning of a potential global change in gender equality issues. A simple hashtag, #MeToo, used in reply to reportage on the sexual misconduct allegations of a noted film producer Harvey Weinstein, urged victims to come forward, break the spiral of silence, and share their stories of harassment and abuse. This ultimately led to a deluge of women and men posting about their personal traumatic experiences with sexual harassment and sexual assault. A simple twitter campaign snowballed into a social movement that touched various industries and areas of life across the world. The hashtag has trended in at least 85 countries so far, and it is feasible to say that the movement has been at least discussed in many more countries (Strum, 2017). The #MeToo movement has garnered various levels of response in different countries. For example, in the US thousands of people went to the streets to march in support of victims of sexual assault and harassment (Pengelly, 2017), in Sweden a law was passed that ruled sex without explicit consent as rape (Baynes, 2018). The news magazine Time chose “The Silence Breakers” as persons of the year and the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 was given to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad, two people who have fought against the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict. It seems that over the past year and a half this mostly women’s social movement has strongly reverberated in the cultural Zeitgeist, and further, issues impacting women have had a larger presence in social discourse.

Even though most of the media focus and existing scholarly works (Mendes et al, 2018; PettyJohn, 2018; Hebert, 2018 to name a few) have by in large focused on the movement and its impact in the U.S.A, the #MeToo movement made its way also to Estonia through social media and traditional media coverage. In Estonia, as in many other countries, the main hashtag was often switched to the local language form (“#Minaka” in this case), although the original remained also in use. As the movement formed rather spontaneously online, it is feasible to say that there are no clear leaders of the movement in Estonia or even in the world in general. The lack of centralised leadership and no clear-cut agenda or end goal for the movement has perhaps limited social movement action repertoires

suitable for this particular social movement and with that its success at influencing political processes.

While in Estonia, the #MeToo movement did not manifest itself in traditional action repertoires of social movements, such as protests or petitions, as it did in some other countries, which are often noted to have an impact on the political elite, it still received considerable media attention, which also puts pressure on political actors. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to analyse the response to the #MeToo movement in the Estonian public sphere. More specifically, the study has two major research questions: first, *how was the #MeToo movement framed in the Estonian mass-media* and second, *how was the movement framed by the politicians in the parliament (Riigikogu)*. Prior literature on media framing of social movements suggest that social movements can face serious resistance from the media, with the “protest paradigm” and “nuisance paradigm” influencing the coverage to be negative. Furthermore, feminist movements that challenge the status quo of gender identities can face additional negative framing from the media and the society at large. All this would suggest that the framing done would be negative towards the movement.

To answer the research questions, firstly media frame analysis will be conducted on opinion pieces collected from three major Estonian news outlets (*Postimees*, *Päevaleht*, *ERR*) to determine the predominant frames used in the media to discuss the movement. The term “frame” denotes the “schemata of interpretation” that allow individuals “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences within their life space and the world at large (Snow et al., 1986: 464). By giving events and occurrences meaning, frames function to organise experience and guide action, whether it be individual, or for the purpose of social movement research, collective. Three core framing tasks indicated by the methodological framework popularised by Snow & Benford (2000) – diagnostic framing, prognostic framing and motivational framing – will be taken as the basis for identifying frames within the texts. While the theoretical background on the matter may suggest that feminist movements and protest movements can face serious negative framing in the media, the findings however show that the #MeToo movement was framed mostly positively in the three news sources. Secondly, the thesis will examine the political response to the #MeToo movement in the *Riigikogu* by conducting frame analysis on the minutes to the parliamentary meetings to find framing statements about the movement.

The findings show absence on any coherent framing attempts, hence very limited political reaction to the movement can be seen.

All this will help to fill in the gap in the existing literature on the #MeToo movement, which so far has largely neglected to analyse the movement in countries other than the U.S.A. As of writing, no notable works have been conducted on the movement in Estonia, furthermore women's movements in general are under researched in Estonia. The thesis is structured in the following manner: first the theoretical background into women's movements will be given, with additional focus being on the #MeToo movement. Then the media's and social movements' relationship will be discussed by giving further insight into framing. The research method and data sample will be explained in further detail. Furthermore, the analysis and findings will be given and ending conclusions will be reached.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Women's social movements

Women's movements are considered to be one of the most enduring and successful of all social movements in the modern period (Marx Ferree & McClurg Mueller, 2004: 576). In fact, current day collective actions taken by women are rooted in opportunity structures that would not exist, would it not be for successful women's organising efforts in the past. For many people, women's movements seem synonymous with organised feminist action, or action that seeks to challenge gender roles and relations that have a negative effect on women's position in the society. However, this view of women's movements may be misleading, as not all women's movements are focused solely on gender related issues (for instance, some may start so, but branch out later, or *vice versa*) and not all women's movements share explicitly feminist values (e.g. the Women Against Feminism Campaign or the various anti-abortion movements). Hence, the thesis will adopt the definition put forth by Marx Ferree & McClurg Mueller (2004), whereby women's movements are considered to be "all organising of women explicitly as women to make any sort of social change [...] regardless of the specific targets of their change efforts at any particular time".

Women's movements of all forms can be found in all contemporary societies. The range of issues that women organise around is vast. In addition to movements like the #MeToo movement that tackles sexual violence, a topic that clearly challenges gender relations, women have mobilised around non-gendered topics such as climate change, gun control, substance abuse, peace in conflict zones and so forth. This has been the case through-out the history of women's movements. Even in the earliest stages, in the 19th century, during the "first-wave" of feminist activity, women mobilised both to advance women's position in the society (be it to gain suffrage, or better women's education) and to lessen other societal issues (ending the slave trade, gaining protections for weak and marginalised groups etc.) (Marx Ferree & McClurg Mueller, 2004: 582). Nevertheless, something that all these movements have in common, is that they all base their mobilisation on appeals to women as a constituency.

Violence against women is a global problem that today is widely considered to be an issue in conflict with fundamental human rights – even though the topic is not covered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Htun & Weldon, 2012: 548). No region of the world is immune to it. For example, a 2014 European Union wide survey estimated that around 45-55% of European women have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15 and one in three women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014: 21; 95). Hence, governments, international organisations and social movements have realised over the decades that violence against women must be dealt with through comprehensive policy changes. Yet, there are considerable discrepancies in how governments tackle this issue – some countries may have very sweeping policy regimes in place, whereas other may be seriously lagging behind. Generally, the types of policies governments can adopt vary quite largely: they can contain providing services for victims, legal reform, providing programmes targeted to vulnerable populations of women, training professionals, establishing prevention programmes or implementing administrative reforms (Htun & Weldon, 2012: 550-551).

Htun & Weldon (2012) suggest that mobilisation of feminists in both domestic and transnational contexts is the critical factor in determining policy change in favour of combating violence against women. Violence against women is rarely raised as an important issue without the interference of feminist groups in their view (Htun & Weldon, 2012: 552). Even if one were to look at organisations that represent groups that include women, they can often fail to realise the importance of the topic for women. This is why the work of feminist groups and movements in this field is so important – they have helped to define the problem, create awareness of it and put the issue on both national and international political agendas. In terms of agenda setting, an issue salient for this thesis, women's movements that are autonomous – that is one's that are not organised within larger political institutions e.g. political parties or the state – may find it easier to prioritise violence against women as a central problem, and thus be more effective at influencing the agenda setting processes (Htun & Weldon, 2012: 553). However, in the case of the #MeToo movement, the strength and autonomy of the movement may be affected negatively by the very decentralised nature of the movement. If there is no clear leadership within the movement, then the attempts at impacting agenda setting may

potentially be lost in the “noise” that the movement inevitably creates. If there is no one to first, form a cohesive message of the movement and then second, deliver it to the masses and the policy makers, then all the attention a movement gets could be not sufficient to see substantial political impact. This is related to the “weak control” framing dilemma that Gamson (2004) indicated, which will be discussed in detail below. In addition, Luders (2016) finds that a combination of public indifference, the absence of counter-mobilisation and intense political mobilisation on the behalf of the movement can produce policy success for feminist movements.

Overall, the responsiveness of political targets to the demands of social movements are tied to, as Luders (2016) claims, two distinct costs: disruption costs and concession costs. Disruption costs result directly or indirectly from the movement’s agitation (the movement’s tactics obstruct the target’s realisation of pre-set goals) and concession costs result from the social, political and/or economic costs that coincide with giving into the movement’s demands. Both of the respective costs for the political elite are defined by three factors: public opinion on the issue, mass attentiveness (or “salience”) and electoral leverage of the benefit-seeker (Luders, 2016: 188). For feminist movements, Luders finds that the disruption costs that they can inflict on political targets, are dependent on, in some measure, public attitudes towards gender equality (Luders, 2016: 195). In terms of concession costs, it has been suggested that feminist movements seem to be more successful, if the issue is framed as a matter of equity or basic fairness (as they are viewed culturally unthreatening), rather than as a change to gendered identities (Luders, 2016: 196). This would suggest that the #MeToo movement in Estonia may be unsuccessful at impacting political targets, as the decentralised nature of the movement and lack of clear tactics makes inflicting high disruption costs difficult and as the movement tried to change the status quo in gender relations, which can be considered to be culturally threatening.

Technological innovations have also changed the opportunities that social movements have for changing political systems. The playbook of potential action repertoires has significantly grown with the proliferation of information and communications technologies. New tools, like the internet, can facilitate mobilisation and participation in traditional forms of protest, while also creating a pathway for new transnational forms of collaboration and mobilisation (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010: 1147). The new digitalised action repertoires of social movements can be divided into two dimensions. The first

dimension distinguishes between internet-supported forms of action and internet-based actions and the second between low and high thresholds for participation (Van Laer & Van Aelst, 2010: 1148; 1150). In terms of the first dimension, the #MeToo movement shows how both of the forms can be in use in parallel. The “traditional” repertoires of action for social movements have been made easier to organise with the help of the internet and new avenues for action have risen through the use of internet. As for the second dimension, both low threshold and high threshold actions have been in use for the #MeToo movement (depending on the location). Moreover, Jennifer Earl has identified four broad styles of internet engagement: brochureware; online facilitation of offline activism; online organising; and online participation (Earl, 2016: 364-365). These different types of action also have different implications on the potential consequences of activism. Such is the case with the #MeToo movement– the style of the action taken in specific contexts could have had an impact on the results. While it is known how the movement began - that it grew out from a simple hashtag used on various social media platforms such as Twitter on Facebook in the USA and spread “virally” to multiple countries across continents – it is most likely less known how the movement evolved in different contexts and what results it showed. The playbook of actions taken could explain for the potential differences.

The transition of social movements to online spaces has created new avenues for maximising their reach and societal impact. The general lack of a centralised structure that some social movements may contend with (an issue that is definitely salient for the #MeToo movement) and the lack of resources have shifted social movements onto relatively cost-effective online platforms (Xiong et al., 2019: 10). Furthermore, rapid information exchange and dissemination beyond geographical boundaries is a highly desirable side-effect of digital activism. The #MeToo movement is perhaps one of the most noteworthy examples of digital feminist activism, yet it indicates the overall growing trend of the public’s willingness to engage with resistance and challenges to sexism, patriarchy and other forms of oppression (Mendes et al., 2018: 237). So-called “hashtag feminism” is currently one of the most common forms of feminist activism. It involves using hashtags on various social media platforms (but mostly on Twitter) to produce communities of conversation among users. One of the positive sides of producing these communities could be that women and men who share their personal stories find

support within the semi-anonymous community in the form of public responses to their tweet, be it in the form of “retweets”, “favourites”, “likes” or direct messages (Mendes et al., 2018: 238). This builds much needed solidarity within the feminist movement.

Nevertheless, while this type of response may not yield over-arching policy changes that could lessen sexism or sexual misconduct in the society, it still can have a significant positive effect on the survivors, as they can find meaningful support, which can help them along their personal roads to recovery. Hashtags used can function as a vehicle for creating awareness and discussion about an issue, while spreading ideas and binding an individual to a larger community (Xiong et al., 2019: 11). Hashtags can also serve as an indexing system, which allows people to find topics and conversations relevant to them. In addition, hashtag activism can strengthen participatory culture and engender connective actions or that is actions, during which personalised messages are spread through the co-creation of meaning within social movements (Xiong et al., 2019: 12). Information dissemination through the use of hashtags can be divided into two mechanisms: bottom-up and top-down mechanisms (Xiong et al., 2019: 12). The bottom-up process is characterised as an autonomous and self-motivated process that is driven either by individuals or organisations, meanwhile the top-down mechanism is influenced by content creators in media or politics, which have specific aims at promoting certain information or set the agenda. It seems that for the #MeToo movement, the bottom-up mechanism of information dissemination was the predominant mode used.

Online platforms such as Twitter or Facebook can have significant positive aspects to them when conducting online activism campaigns. For example, having access to wider audiences can greatly grow a campaign. Besides global reach, people who have participated in and even organised digital feminist campaigns, claim that the speed and immediacy of action, dialogue between participants, visibility, engagement within the community, contact, connection, collectiveness and shared understanding can be significant positive aspects of online activism (Xiong et al., 2019: 10; Mendes et al., 2018: 240). Online communities can in a way create “safe spaces” where like-minded people can gather to share their ideas and in the case of the #MeToo their very personal stories. However, there is a considerable flipside to this type of activity as well. Opposition to social movements is natural, and this is also apparent for social movements that take place in mostly digital spaces. If digital technologies have allowed for the rise in feminist

thinking, then it has also facilitated the rise of anti-feminist schools of thought. Many participants of women's social movements may experience vitriolic online abuse or "trolling", ranging from rather basic and mild low-level comments (*a la* "you're ugly") to extremely graphic death or rape threats (Mendes et al., 2018: 242). There is fortunately an available set of methods for dealing with this type of harassment ranging from blocking specific accounts to getting involved with law enforcement officers to halt the strongest types of harassment received.

2.2. The #MeToo movement

Sexual harassment and assault are hardly new phenomena in any society. Similarly, women's movements to target these issues are not new (Pellegrini, 2018: 262). The newest iteration of movements that target sexual harassment and sexual assault is the #MeToo movement. The inciting event for the birth of the movement can be indicated as the publishing of exposes of sexual assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein, an American film producer, in the New Yorker and the New York Times. In a response to the articles, the MeToo campaign, which was originated by activist Tarana Burke in 2006 (initially without the hashtag, as Twitter was launched in the same year) as an intersectional project, aimed at supporting girls and women of colour who had experienced sexual violence, was revived and survivors of such acts were encouraged to share their stories of sexual harassment and/or assault to give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem. The initial and perhaps the primary goal of the #MeToo movement was to provide a community of support for survivors of sexual assault and violence (Xiong et al., 2019: 11). The stigma that surrounds sexual violence often marginalises the voices of the survivors, hence the #MeToo movement tries to break through the circle of silence and in that context the movement can be considered to be an example of feminist activism. Still, some critical assessment by Tarana Burke, the originator of the movement, shows worries that the campaign and the slogan #MeToo has been used for something that she did not envision as her work – her campaign was crafted to support survivors by giving them resources and helping them heal, but in her eyes the new form of the #MeToo movement has been more focused on outing the actions of

perpetrators (Jaffe, 2018: 80). Nevertheless, all this has accumulated in one of the largest social media-driven movements seen to date (Traub & Van Hoose Garofalo, 2019: 4). To give a sense of the massive outpouring of engagement with the movement, the hashtag was used 12 million times in the first 24 hours alone, the number has obviously grown over the months since the beginning of the movement (Mendes et al., 2018: 236).

Perhaps the general assumption of people outside the movement was that the #MeToo movement's goal was to take down the perpetrators of the crimes any means necessary and punish them (Jaffe, 2018: 82). But at least initially, the goal was to simply receive acknowledgement for what happened. The truth is that these he-said-she-said type of issues and crimes of a sexual manner can be at times very difficult to verify. The burden of proof can be high. Moreover, depending on the context the society that one finds themselves in, it may not necessarily provide sustainable roads towards justice. In the legal system the victim must first make the law enforcement officers believe her and then the court system. Similarly, in the workplace, the victim of harassment must either turn to HR or their boss, yet these options may not always be viable, as more often than not the harasser is a person, who holds a position of power over the victim. Overall, the spectrum of #MeToo cases is rather varied, both in terms of the types of perpetrators and survivors and the type of accusations levelled against the perpetrator. Obviously, the most publicised #MeToo cases revolve around societally well-known powerful men in influential positions, who are accused of some sort of sexual misconduct. However, in reality most of these types of acts are conducted by "regular" people and hence their transgressions will not be covered in media outlets. In terms of the accusations, the categories can range from relatively "small" inappropriate acts to heinous crimes. Diener (2018) found that there are roughly four broad categories of accusations: sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape and other sexual misconduct. The first three categories are in his words legal terms that are often misunderstood by the general public, and the fourth can be considered a "catch all" for improper actions of a sexual nature that do not fit into one of the other categories (Diener, 2018: 84). So, if one were to approach these categories from a legal perspective in the Estonian context, some issues would become apparent. Under Division 7 "Offences against Sexual Self-determination" the Estonian Penal Code gives a clear definition for rape and following punishment for such a crime (§ 141), a 2017 amendment to the Penal code tackles sexual harassment (§ 153¹) under

Division 1 “Offences against Equality”. However, the Penal Code lacks language about sexual assault. This indicates the difficulty of interpreting the experiences that the survivors may have. Most of the time such instances remain in a grey area, where labelling what happened can be extremely difficult both in a legal manner but also in a psychological sense (many may try to rationalise and lessen the traumatic event in one’s mind).

Why did this great explosion of publicising of misconduct on behalf of famous men against women happen this time, is a question that inevitably rises. Considering that the “birthplace” of the movement was the United States, a possible answer could be one that was put forth by Pellegrini (2018). She argues that the movement “would not have happened without the anger and activism fuelled by rage and bewilderment over the election of Donald Trump” – a president who ultimately defeated a female opponent regardless of the credible accusations of sexual assault made against him in the lead-up to the election (Pellegrini, 2018: 263). Jaffe (2018) similarly holds this position, stating that many feminists feel that during the Trump presidency it is not “the time to accept petty reforms and good-enough moments” and questioning the need to compromise when the opponents from the right wing refuse to do so is rather prevalent. However, the rise of Trump and right-wing sentiments does not fully explain why the movement spread rapidly to other countries as well. One of the reasons for the rapid spread could be tied to the globalised open nature of social media. Should a specific topic, movement or simply a hashtag gather enough momentum and start trending, it is inevitable that some people from outside the origin country will see it. In this case the #MeToo perhaps had aspects that made its dispersion easier: it is a universal topic that impacts countless lives, but also it had sensationalised elements to it. Since the ignition point surrounded Hollywood and celebrities, it captured the imagination of people and provided enough material to discuss the issues in social and traditional media outlets. Another potential reasoning could be that similar events happened in other countries slightly before or around the start of the #MeToo movement, which may have primed the public for the upcoming discussion. For example, in Estonia a few months before the movement gained relevance, a former Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas got caught in a sexual harassment scandal (Tagel, 2017: ERR, 2017), which involved sexual misconduct at a party. Similar situation happened in Argentina, where claims of sexual harassment against public figures and journalists

surfaced around the same time the initial Weinstein allegations became public (Parreno Taylor et al., 2018: 242). It is possible that many other countries had latent scandals that had perhaps passed, yet still remained in the collective memory, which made the spread of the #MeToo movement easier.

Overall, the “official” response to the movement by policy makers has varied from country to country. For example, in the United States the federal and state governments have taken action to respond to the #MeToo movement. The federal government of the USA has legislation pending that would prohibit requiring arbitration for sexual harassment claims and would overhaul a two-decade old law related to sexual harassment that occurs in Congress (Traub & Van Hoose Garofalo, 2019: 5-6). Furthermore, businesses are no longer permitted to deduct amounts paid in settlement of claims related to sexual harassment or abuse if the settlement is subject to a non-disclosure agreement. Moreover, many states have passed their own legislation related to sexual harassment that range from banning non-disclosure agreements, banning mandatory arbitration, requiring training and policies, and requiring equal pay (ibid). As for some examples from other countries: in France, lawmakers passed a bill that banned gender-based harassment (“catcalling”), both on the streets and on public transit, with implementing an additional fining system for the culprits (O'Grady, 2018). The support for the measure was fuelled, by the #MeToo movement, which made considerable waves in France. In Sweden, the parliament passed a law that ruled sex without explicit consent as rape (Baynes, 2018). In Canada, Bill C-65 – legislation which intended to change the regulatory structure for sexual harassment in all federally-regulated workplaces – was fast-tracked, amended, and passed by both the House and the Senate (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2018).

2.3. Social movements, framing and public reaction

Outreach to public sphere via mass-media, and nowadays also via social media is crucial for the survival and influence of any social movement. Thus, actively engaging with these mediums is vital for any social movement, should they wish to receive political reaction of any kind. Mass media’s influence on political processes has been observed throughout the decades. Many researchers have found that mass media coverage has, to varying

extents, an impact on the political agenda be it in the parliament, government or political parties (Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2010: 323). Still, mass media may matter more for some agendas than others (symbolic agendas are easier to influence than substantial one's) and some issues may be more conducive to political agenda setting as compared to others. Moreover, the medium may have different results, with newspapers being viewed as stronger influencers than TV news. Generally, it is believed that the mass media's impact on politics is immediate and that it does not take too long of a time to materialise. Similarly, the media seemingly matters more for politics in non-election times than in election times. Vliegenthart & Walgrave (2010) found in their research of the mass media's influence on agenda setting in Belgium considerable support for the assumption that such influence is present. Their findings do indicate that some parties are more impacted by the mass media (smaller parties and opposition parties) and that some issues may be more effected by the mass media (such as the issues that the parties have covered in their party manifestos for instance).

Social movement success can be defined very differently depending on the goals of a movement. Success could mean gaining access to institutionalised channels of political decision-making, influencing various targets (e.g. legislatures, media, courts), achieving long stated goals such as specific reforms in state policy, organisational longevity or receiving funding or other means of support (Mitsch Bush, 1992: 588). Generally, two categories of outcomes are considered in literature: direct outcomes (i.e. securing constituent benefits) and indirect outcomes (i.e. changes in public perception or biographical changes) (Cress & Snow, 2000: 1065). Furthermore, to achieve their set goals movements can: one, disrupt target interests; two, persuade third parties to join the movement's position; or three, negotiate with state actors using conventional institutional tactics (Luders, 2016: 186). In addition, movements often do not have a singular goal that they attempt to achieve. In fact, movements can have "bundles of multiple goals", for which they achieve differing degrees of results (Luders, 2016: 193). For women's movements' simply defining success as access to institutionalised channels of political decision-making or finding success in passing certain reforms may not be the most useful, as even in liberal democratic states gender inequality can be found at the core of the society, i.e. simply passing some legislation will not most likely address the deep underlying issues at the centre of women's movements' demands (Mitsch Bush, 1992:

589-590). Furthermore, simply focusing on the end result of passing a law for example, misses the fact that policy change takes place over multiple phases: it has to first be introduced, then come to a vote, after that it must pass in one or more chambers of the parliament (depending on the political system) and it may even have to be confirmed by a referendum (King et al., 2005: 1211). Breaking up the policy making process helps to analyse, in which phase social movements have more impact. It is likely that social movements are more impactful in the earlier, perhaps less consequential stages of the policy making process than in the latter stages (King et al., 2005: 1213). Thus, social movements (the #MeToo movement included) may be more successful at raising the salience of an issue – setting the agenda – and getting bills introduced rather than getting bills ultimately passed.

From the social movements' side, Cress & Snow (2000) suggest that there is no clear-cut pathway or set of conditions to achieving movement outcomes. What they found in their research of 15 homeless social movement organisations, was that the four different outcomes (representation, resources, rights and relief) were reached through six different combinations of their pre-set six causal conditions (SMO viability, disruptive tactics, sympathetic allies, city support, diagnostic framing and prognostic framing) (Cress & Snow, 2000: 1096). For the purpose of this thesis, the role of diagnostic and prognostic framing should be stressed. Diagnostic framing is important for social movements' because it problematises and focuses attention on an issue (Cress & Snow, 2000: 1071). Through it the perception of the issue is shaped and who or what is culpable for it is identified. Prognostic framing stipulates exact goals for the movement to work toward and it identifies the means or tactics for achieving the set objectives. The attainment of movement goals can be strongly facilitated by skilful diagnostic and prognostic framing (Cress & Snow, 2000: 1099). Effective framing can affect political opportunity, organisational viability and legitimacy. Furthermore, mobilisation can be highly dependent on the creation of effective collective action frames – the set of beliefs and meanings that inspire or legitimate social movement activities (McVeigh et al., 2004: 655). This can be difficult, as collective action frames that attract members in one certain context, may not be effective in another. Moreover, while the frame must recruit active members and build solidarity between them, it should not ideally alienate the larger population by generating backlash, as this estranges the political elites too. Still, to some

extent, boundary construction is necessary, as diagnostic framing is adversarial by nature (McVeigh et al., 2004: 656). Diagnostic and prognostic framing need to point to some potential adversaries, as it will give a reason for participation to those interested yet being too aggressive makes influencing the larger political process too difficult, as those on the receiving end of the movement's actions and framing (particularly elected officials) will make their own calculations about the potential consequences of showing support (McVeigh et al., 2004: 657).

International women's movements especially are challenged with the creation of adequate collective action frames. Hewitt (2011) points out that there are considerable sources of intra-movement division in play for women's movements that can be overcome with shared frames. For example, issues like orientation towards capitalism and neoliberal globalisation, generational conflicts, sexual identities, feminist identities and so forth, can make it difficult to unify under one goal. These types of differences and tensions create challenges for alliance-building and the creation of appropriate frames (Hewitt, 2011: 75). To promote unity among diversity, contemporary women's movements use three categories of frames (oppositional, rights-based and movement process/capacity-building frames) according to Hewitt. Oppositional frames are a part of diagnostic framing strategies, their sole focus is on the identification of the "enemy" or the problem e.g. religious fundamentalism or militarisation (Hewitt, 2011: 80). Rights-based frames are a part of prognostic framing, as they encompass a wide range of issues and goals (Hewitt, 2011: 82). Lastly, movement process and capacity building frames are internally focussed – they draw attention to the need for and importance of supporting fellow activists and fostering growth in multiple sectors of the movement (Hewitt, 2011: 85).

As already stated above, a factor that can have great impact on a social movement's success at eliciting societal change, is media coverage. Almost all people turn to the media to gather news daily and it is considered to be a cornerstone institution in democratic societies. The way mass media covers social movements can strongly influence how the general public and the political elites view the movement and its goals. Thus, a positive frame of the movement could help it reach their goals, such as impacting policy making processes, while a negative frame could hinder a movement's success. Movements need to be viewed as positive by the mass (media) to have any leverage against the political elites or just to simply find support from them. Frames can be seen as thought organisers,

something that “[...] spotlight certain events and their underlying causes and consequences and direct our attention away from others” (Gamson, 2004: 245). Social movements, thus face a two pronged issue that they must contend with in the arena of mass media, first they must find a way to adapt their strategies and tactics to suit the discursive opportunity structure (frame their own actions in a suitable way) and secondly, they are affected by the frames that the media places upon them.

The process of framing itself consists of clear stages: frame-building, frame-setting and individual and societal level consequences of framing (de Vreese, 2005: 52). Frame-building refers to the factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames: internal factors come from the journalists and news organisations (i.e. editorial policies), while external factors come from interactions between journalists, elites and social movements (i.e. how the social movement officially frames their own actions). Frame-setting refers to the interaction between media frames and individuals’ prior knowledge and predispositions on the topic. The consequences of framing on an individual level consequence may mean altered attitudes about an issue based on exposure to certain frames, while on the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping social level processes such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions.

A comprehensive framing strategy for the mass media by a social movement should attempt to reach three different goals (Gamson, 2004: 250). Firstly, they should increase readiness to act collectively on the part of the movement’s primary constituents, secondly, they must increase mobilisation potential among bystanders, who may be potential supporters, and lastly the movement should neutralise and/or discredit the framing efforts of adversaries, keeping their potential supporters passive. However, there are considerable dilemmas that arise with picking suitable tactics for achieving these goals, as put forth by Gamson (2004). The “depth of challenge” dilemma indicates the difficulties of finding consensus in internal arguments among the movement’s different actors (Gamson, 2004: 250). For example, at times challenging the dominant frame may be justified, yet it can be difficult, as strong internal pressures work against such acts. The “access” dilemma is concerned with gaining entry to the mass media arena and then receiving standing – or in other words, reaching a point where the movement is treated as an agent and not simply an object to be reported on (Gamson, 2004: 251). As will be discussed more below, the tactics sometimes needed to enter the arena may be rather

radical, which can then hinder the standing of those movements and actors. The need for validation dilemma stems from the validating power of the media spotlight – to gain the spotlight, movements may turn to celebrity spokespersons or leaders, yet this can create accountability issues within the movement (Gamson, 2004: 252). Lastly, the weak control dilemma derives from the organisational form of social movements (Gamson, 2004: 253). Unlike in bureaucratic organisations, the agents in social movements mostly participate in a voluntary capacity, thus compelling them to do something that they do not want to, is fairly difficult. The weak control that movements have on their participants, makes it difficult to form a coherent framing strategy.

Since social movements aim to call forth progressive social change, by elevating key issues on the social agenda and giving a voice to disenfranchised individuals, one would assume that media outlets would both pay attention to the movement's protests and cover them as objectively as possible, however in reality this may not always be the case (Boyle et al., 2012: 127-128). To reiterate, social movements depend on the positive coverage of their goals and actions to have an impact in the society and on the political elites. Veritably, research suggest that a "protest paradigm" – a set of news coverage patterns that typifies mainstream media coverage – can arise (McLeod, 2007: 185). This paradigm "[...] generally disparages protesters and hinders their role as vital actors on the political stage" (ibid). Various patterns become apparent, when analysing the protest paradigm, with constant frames of criticism of protesters and protest groups and highlighting the presence of any so-called "extremists" among protestors being commonplace (Di Cicco, 2010: 136). Consequently, many social movements (especially protest movements) may find themselves between a rock and a hard place, as engaging mass media is essential for their success: conducting a peaceful protest that focuses on articulating issue positions may not be considered a "good news story" and not get coverage, while protest movements that resort to more dramatic or even extreme measures risk being delegitimised by the media. Boyle et al. (2012) research findings do, in fact, indicate that social movement tactics are the main driving force behind news coverage, and to be more specific the tactics seem to be more influential on media coverage than the movement's general goals. Likewise, they found that groups that use more extreme tactics are treated more critically, as the protest paradigm suggests (Boyle et al., 2012: 139).

Another paradigm that can surround the coverage of social movements and their protests, is the “public nuisance paradigm” – a dismissing view of protests that frame them as annoyances that interfere with daily life (Di Cicco, 2010: 136). While this paradigm does have certain overlapping points with the protest paradigm, it does not simply dismiss a certain method of protests or participant, but rather suggests that any and all protests cause more trouble than they are worth. It invokes three larger themes that work to belittle protests and protestors. First, the idea of protests as bothersome is invoked (holding a protest interrupts daily life, hence it should not be held), second protests are seen as impotent (protests have no merit, hence should be not held), and third protests are considered to be unpatriotic (protests hurt the nation, hence should not be held) (Di Cicco, 2010: 137-138).

The framing of women’s movements by the media can include certain frames that are unique only to these types of movements. For example, when prevailing gender norms within a society are challenged by feminist movements, they can receive considerable push back from the society and the media. In the eyes of the “public” (feminist) women’s movements may put the family as a unity and morality at risk. This combined with resistance to feminism can lead to the creation of frames such as the “decline of the family” frame, or “women’s selfishness” frame (Marx Ferree & McClurg Mueller, 2004: 596). Even though women’s political participation and representation has risen all over the world throughout the past decades, and the overall position in the society for women has strengthened, women are still presented as the preservers of (familial) “traditions” and the reservoirs of morality, hence going against the grain of societal norms can receive severe criticism. Furthermore, another frame that afflicts women’s movements in the mass media is the “emotionality” frame (ibid). This stems from the prevailing gendering of rationality as a masculine trait and emotionality as feminine. This leads to a pathway, where ultimately at the negative end women can be framed as hysterical or irrational, hence giving the public a way to dismiss their claims and positions. Although on the positive side, the “emotion culture of caring” (i.e. the feelings of compassion, empathy and love), which are characteristics of many women’s communities, stimulate collective identity and collective action among women (McKee Hurwitz, Taylor, 2012: 814).

Thus, media coverage of social movements is undoubtedly important for any movement, as the platform that mass media provides, allows the movement in positive scenarios to

amplify their positions, find wider support and put more pressure on political targets, should their goals be connected to policy change. Protest movements need to have positive coverage of their goals and actions to elicit any kind of positive political response. As shown above in the social movements that challenge the *status quo* are often framed negatively in the media, which can significantly hinder their potential success. The protest paradigm and nuisance paradigm are great factors in that. Furthermore, literature shows that feminist movements that directly challenge gender roles and norms within the patriarchal society can be viewed rather harshly by the media. Hence, this leads to hypothesis 1:

- *H1: The #MeToo movement will be framed predominantly in a negative manner.*

To be more specific, it is expected that the frames will mostly fall under the category of diagnostic framing, that is the opinion pieces will focus on the causes of the movement and will tend to assign blame as is done with diagnostic framing. Hewitt (2011) writes that “one clear strategic advantage of frames that are solely diagnostic is that they do not require consensus about solutions, or even necessarily issue priorities” (Hewitt, 2011: 81). This could suggest that there will be multiple diagnostic frames present, as there may not be one clearly articulated cause or someone/thing to blame. Providing a clear-cut solution to the issue seems difficult, hence the presence of prognostic framing seems more unlikely. Similarly, since in Estonia no large-scale mobilisation efforts for protests or other actions were present, motivational framing also seems unlikely. The negative aspect is expected to manifest itself in shifting the cause and blame to things that the victim did rather than the perpetrator.

For the purpose of the research, the parliament will be the political elite and its response to the movement will be measured through statements made during the parliamentary sittings. Due to the fact that the #MeToo movement in Estonia stayed mostly in the social media and mass media sphere and did not expand to street protests or other more visible forms of social movement action repertoires and the general lack of protest culture and feminist mobilisation in Estonia, the potential political impact of the #MeToo movement seems unlikely to even non-existent. This assumption leads to hypothesis 2:

- *H2: The political elite had no significant response to the #MeToo movement.*

3. Methodology and Data

In order to answer the research questions presented above, media content analysis and qualitative content analysis will be conducted on the data collected. For the purpose of this thesis, media content analysis will be done through the use of the frame analysis method, which will be used on data collected from news media. The qualitative content analysis will be used on data from the parliament. The sections below will go into the methodology and data in more depth.

3.1. Frame analysis

The term “frame” denotes the “schemata of interpretation” that allow individuals “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences within their life space and the world at large (Snow et al., 1986: 464). By giving events and occurrences meaning, frames function to organise experience and guide action, whether it be individual, or for the purpose of social movement research, collective. Frame analysis is a social constructivist and interpretive methodological tool that focuses directly on the causal questions of movement participation and mobilisation: it analyses how particular ideas and ideologies are used deliberately to mobilise supporters of a social movement and demobilise adversaries (Lindekilde, 2014: 200). It is a method that looks at how existing “objects” or “topics” are framed by different actors and how they twist their meaning in certain directions. For the purpose of this thesis framing (by the media) will be seen as an independent variable, as it focuses on the questions of whether and how framing has affected the #MeToo movement outcomes, or to be more specific, political agenda setting (the dependent variable).

Snow & Benford (2000) have indicated that social movements have three core framing tasks – “diagnostic framing” (the identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality), “prognostic framing” (the proposed solution to the identified problem; the indication of strategies, goals, etc.), and “motivational framing” (the indication of a rationale for action). Diagnostic and prognostic framing are targeted towards “consensus

mobilisation”, or the aim of creating a shared understanding of the problem and the solution, while motivational framing seeks “action mobilisation”, or driving collective action on the basis of shared perceptions (Lindekilde, 2014: 207). This thesis will focus mostly on diagnostic framing of the issue in combination with overall positive-negative coding of the articles. Media frame analysis often uses a useful distinction between frame types: issue-specific frames and generic frames (de Vreese, 2005: 55). “Issue-specific” frames are only pertinent to particular topics or events, while “generic frames” are intended to surpass thematic limitations, often over time and in different cultural contexts. Since the goal of this thesis is to analyse frames that embody the most important elements of the debate surrounding the #MeToo movement, issue-specific frames will be the central focus. To identify issue-specific frames and any frames that can be classified under the three core frames an inductive approach has been adopted, which allows the frames to emerge from the analysis in a manner that is not influenced by the author’s prior expectations of the issue (as compared to deductive frame research, which would be done with frames that are defined and operationalised before the analysis) (Lindekilde, 2014: 213).

3.2. Overview of Data

To conduct the media content analysis consisting of frame analysis and to test the effect of media coverage of the #MeToo movement on the actions of parliamentarians in the parliament, three major news sources were searched for news content about the movement explicitly (articles concretely about the #MeToo movement) and for themes that are directly tied to the movement, such as harassment and violence against women if the movement was not mentioned specifically. In addition, minutes to parliamentary sittings were used as sources to measure the political response to the movement. Table 1. presented below shows the composition of the news media sample used in this thesis. The articles gathered were all posted on their respective websites in the time period of September 2017 to December 2018. A total of 266 #MeToo related articles were found in the three sources – *Postimees*, *Päevaleht* and *ERR* - over the period under analysis. General news coverage of the movement (e.g. articles about allegations against a certain

celebrity or otherwise related reporting) and opinion pieces were divided into two separate groups, since simplistic media reporting of foreign events is likely not very important for the movement in Estonia and its political impact. Imbalanced reporting in terms of the content (predominantly salacious news from Hollywood versus serious articles about the situation of sexual harassment in Estonian society), could create a perception that the #MeToo movement is perhaps not “relevant” in the Estonian society: the movement is something foreign, about harassment in only one industry (the movie industry). The analysis will take the sample of opinion pieces as the main source of data, as classical opinion pieces differ from news articles due to their structure. Opinion pieces follow the author’s central thesis on an issue, which is supported by clear arguments – it is meant to persuade the reader to adopt a certain position –, while news articles attempt to provide information on a current event (Ivask, 2018).

Table 1. Articles relating to the #MeToo movement

Publication	<i>Postimees</i>	<i>ERR</i>	<i>Päevaleht</i>
Total number of articles	142	76	48
Number of opinion pieces	63	22	27
Total opinion pieces	112		
Total sample	266		

Postimees and *Päevaleht* were chosen as sources for the sample due to their relatively large readership. According to the Estonian Newspaper Association the *Postimees* has the second largest print-run in Estonia on weekdays (~40000), however the Saturday edition’s circulation is noticeably higher than any of the competitors at ~43000 (Estonian Newspaper Association, 2019). This average print-run also excludes any additional regional newspapers that can be ordered along with *Postimees*. In terms of circulation, *Päevaleht* is in the midrange of Estonian newspapers, with around 15000 copies. However, this newspaper was added to the selection due to it being different ownership – *Päevaleht* is owned by Ekpress Grupp and *Postimees* by Postimees Grupp. This could potentially lessen any ideological biases that may become apparent if analysing

newspapers under the same ownership. ERR or Eesti Rahvusringhääling (Estonian Public Broadcasting) indicates by its name that it is a publicly funded organisation. While it does not have a print publication, it has a considerable online news presence. Considering the decline of print media's readership, it is important to consider outlets that are based solely online, hence the selection of ERR's news site. However, an issue arises with accessing the readerships of online versions of newspapers and solely online news sites, as companies are not inclined to reveal the number of page visits they receive, as it directly ties into the advertising revenue they get. Thus, research into this is hard to find. Still, a potential estimate of the real situation can be given, for example in 2018 *Postimees* published an article that claimed that they received 240 000 hits per day and 613 000 unique visits per month (Järv, 2018).

Chart 1. Articles about the #MeToo movement over time.

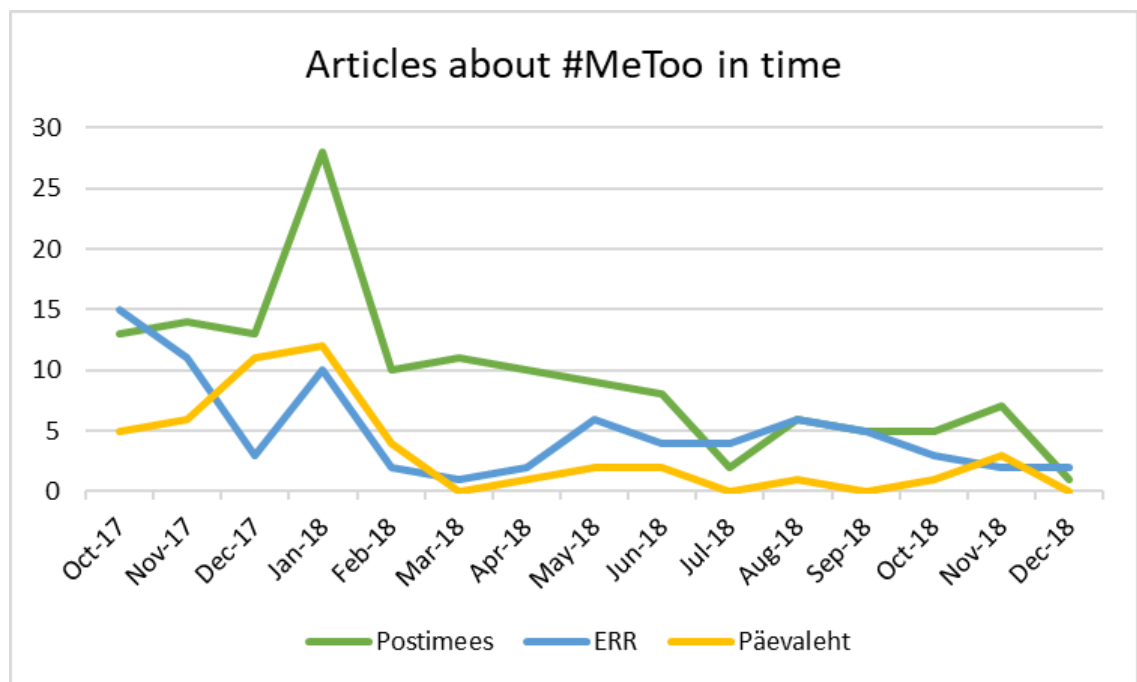


Chart 1. shows the coverage of #MeToo and topics related to the movement in time, starting from October 2017, the “starting point” of the movement, to December 2018. As expected, the coverage of the topic is more frequent in the first months during which the movement gained its momentum, both home and abroad. There is a noticeable uptick in #MeToo related post all the three news sources in January 2018 due to a scandal that arose in Estonia, which was related to the movement, or at least the issue of violence

against women. The scandal broke out, when the then Minister of Justice Urmas Reinsalu (IS), wrote an opinion story for *Päevaleht*, in support of Tiit Ojasoo directing the show at the 100th Anniversary of the Estonian Republic presidential reception (Reinsalu, 2018). The selection of Ojasoo, a stage director, who had attacked an actress in the past (Teder, 2016), created outrage in certain sections of the public, which led to an open letter to the President calling for the removal of Ojasoo from the position, signed by 104 prominent people (Reisenbuk, 2018). The Minister of Justice was highly critical of said open letter, calling it a “ludicrous mass petition” and “media-battery”, but perhaps the most provocative comment was directed towards the people, who supported the letter – their actions were dubbed as “a flock of hens’ hatchetjob” (*kanakarja kambakas*). Such a statement by a high-ranking politician, received a lot of backlash in the media, calling for the Minister to apologise or even step down, all this ultimately led to a vote of no confidence in the parliament, spearheaded by the opposition (mostly the Reform party). The vote of was not successful, and the Minister of Justice remained in his position.

Chart 2. Opinion pieces about #MeToo in time.

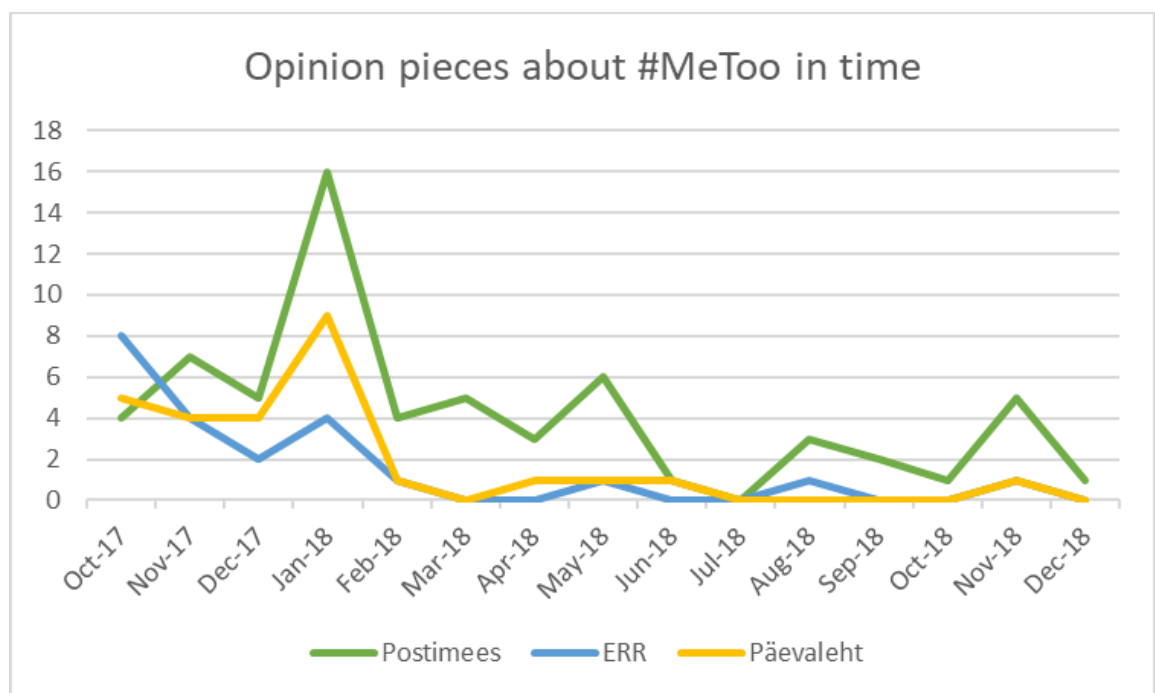


Chart 2. shows the coverage of the #MeToo movement through opinion pieces in the time period of October 2017 to December 2018. As with the data shown in Chart 1., the large section of the coverage was generated within the first four months. Again, one can see a

significant rise in #MeToo related coverage in all the three news sources in January. This is similarly due to the so-called Reinsalu scandal. After January of 2018, as coverage of #MeToo and its related topics dropped off for *ERR* and *Päevaleht*, *Postimees*, however kept on releasing #MeToo related content in a larger quantity. The increase of opinion pieces in May can be attributed to the “#MangToo” scandal, whereby a noted Estonian astrologist Igor Mang was implicated in multiple accounts of sexual harassment and assault. The connecting element apparent in the November 2018 rise of opinion pieces, was the harassment scandal surrounding the former University of Tartu director Martin Hallik.

Table 2. Articles relating to the #MeToo movement in *Postimees* by portal

Portal	<i>Postimees</i>	<i>Elu24</i>	<i>Arvamus</i>	<i>Sõbranna</i>	<i>Other</i>
Number of articles	43	38	33	16	12
Number of opinion pieces	16	1	33	9	4

Table 2. shows the distribution of #MeToo related content in Postimees.ee. Articles that were not published in special portals devoted to specific type of content were placed under the label *Postimees*, hence this group of articles is the largest. These articles were mostly posted under the categories of “Eesti” (Estonian local news), “*Tänane leht*” (today’s paper) or in the online versions of regional newspapers that are under *Postimees* such as the *Tartu Postimees* or *Virumaa Teataja*. Nevertheless, over half of the articles do not go beyond simply reporting on sexual abuse allegations or other content that does not provide opinions on the matter. Even starker disparity between simple reporting and articles containing opinions on the issue is apparent with articles from the portal *Elu24*, although it is understandable, as the portal is dedicated to entertainment news and celebrity gossip. The opinions portal (*Arvamus*) hosts, as labelled, only opinion pieces and the portal *Sõbranna* (Girlfriend) that is targeted towards women, published mostly opinion articles along with some general articles. Handful of miscellaneous articles that were published in portals such as *Sport* or *Kultuur* (Culture) were grouped together under the label *Other*

due to their general scarcity. These articles lean towards simple reporting on the movement.

Table 3. Articles relating to the #MeToo movement in *ERR* by portal

Portal	<i>Menu</i>	<i>Välismaa</i>	<i>Arvamus</i>	<i>Other</i>
Number of articles	33	17	13	13
Number of opinion pieces	2	0	13	7

Table 3. indicates the distribution of #MeToo related posts in *ERR* by portal. Most have been published under the *Menu* (Fame) page, which is focused on entertainment news. As is expected with such content portals, this group boasts the most articles posted, yet only two of the 33 give opinions on the issue. The articles published under the label *Välismaa* (Foreign news) contained coverage of the movement in foreign countries, mostly by relaying series of accusations levelled against notable men, hence this group does not have any opinion pieces. 13 articles were published in the opinion's (*Arvamus*) portal during this period. Lastly, the group "other" was compiled from portals *Eesti* (Estonia), *Majandus* (Economics) and *Novaator* - a science centred portal. It contains overall 13 articles, out of which 7 are opinion pieces.

Table 4. Articles relating to the #MeToo movement in *Päevaleht* by portal

Portal	<i>Arvamus</i>	<i>Eesti</i>	<i>Kultuur</i>	<i>Other</i>
Number of articles	25	12	6	5
Number of opinion pieces	25	2	0	0

Table 4. shows the distribution of #MeToo related articles in *Päevaleht* by portal. Most of the articles for this news outlet – 25 - were published under the Opinions page during this time period. The second group was formed by compiling articles posted under the label *Eesti* and *Laupäevaleht* (Saturday's paper), to make up 12 articles from which 2

could be considered opinion pieces. From the portal *Kultuur*, no opinion pieces were found. Lastly, the group other was assembled from the portals *Ärileht* and *Välismaa*. Out of the 5 articles none could be considered opinion pieces.

Table 5. Discussion of #MeToo related topics in the parliament

Type of session	Number of sessions	References to women/percentage	#MeToo adjacent references/percentage
Sitting of the Riigikogu	116	34 (~29,3%)	9 (~7,7%)
Sitting of the Riigikogu: interpellations and unscheduled statements	39	7 (~17,9%)	1 (~2,5%)
Question Time	40	8 (20%)	2 (5%)
Extraordinary session	1	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Additional sitting	1	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	197	49 (~24,8%)	13 (~6,5%)

Source: Riigikogu stenogrammid: <http://stenogrammid.riigikogu.ee/>

Table 5. above shows the parliaments discussion of #MeToo related topics from the period of September 2017 to December 2018. During this time a total of 197 sittings and other related meetings were held in the *Riigikogu*. As an initial search for keywords #MeToo and #MinaKa did not yield any results, the minutes of the meetings were searched for any and all references to women and explicitly gendered issues during this period. As the table indicates, women were referenced to in total of 49 sittings. Although, it is important to note that one sitting may in itself contain multiple references to women (most references to #MeToo adjacent topics do in fact come from one sitting – the sitting where the Minister of Justice Urmas Reinsalu faced a vote of no confidence), whereas some may have simply one brief reference to for example violence against women. However, not all discussion of women and issues are related to the #MeToo movement. During this period, issues like the gender pay gap and women’s role in the military were

discussed. More importantly, there was a lengthy discussion within the society and the *Riigikogu* about the situation of birthing centres in Estonia and access to OBGYN doctors that strongly inflated the amount of references to women. Hence, to access whether the #MeToo topic was in some shape or form discussed in the parliament, keywords such as “harassment”, “violence against women”, “domestic violence” and “sexual violence” were searched for. This search produced results from 13 parliamentary sittings, which will make up the final sample.

3.3. Coding

Prior to identifying prevalent frames used in the debate surrounding the #MeToo movement, preliminary coding was done to determine whether the opinion pieces making up the corpus of the data were positive (1), neutral (0) or negative (-1) towards the movement. Determining whether an opinion piece on the topic was positive or negative was relatively simple, as the language used to describe the movement and its goals/results was the greatest indicator. For example, articles that were firmly positioned against sexual harassment, or articles that maintained a positive approach towards the victims/accusers (e.g. calling them to come forward and share their stories, denouncing those who blame the victims), would be coded as positive, while articles that questioned the motivations of the people who came forward with accusations, or that lamented the end of “flirtation” as we know it, would be coded negative. Other opinion pieces that did not clearly touch upon the #MeToo movement, but discussed adjacent issues, like the nature of harassment in general, or the Reinsalu scandal (discussed above briefly), were coded as neutral as they did not carry any clear normative positions with them. Some examples will be now given to show the type of positive or negative language used in various opinion pieces about the topic.

Example positive:

All of these cases must be taken seriously. Times and conditions have changed and us with them. Both in America and Europe, people are daring to speak about what happened

to them. The attitude that the victim is at fault is cast off. This is why victims dare to bring old harassment stories to the light of day (Sutrop, 2017).¹

This brief excerpt from an opinion piece shows how the author has positioned themselves in relation to the movement. The seriousness of the accusations is stressed – the language used shows that the author positions themselves on the side of the victims. Speaking up is encouraged and valued, while victim blaming is denounced. From this short excerpt and from the entire opinion piece the support for the movement's positions shines through, hence the positive coding.

Examples negative:

"There was, in principle, nothing news worthy, over which to complain. This guy has gone to the BBC to tell this story only because the Spacey thing has come up. Yes, there are disgusting episodes too, but what he said [...] come on, it was just making a move on him. I do not know, maybe the young man could be even little pleased that Kevin Spacey hit on him." claimed Nestor (Ernits, 2017)²

The brief excerpt above from a person's opinion on a specific scandal illustrates common themes that were often used in opinion pieces that were coded as negative. Firstly, there is the downplaying of the specific case, which in some other opinion pieces manifested in downplaying the entire movement. The section shows the questioning of the victim's motives – that they went to the media only because it was a hot-button issue – which is another predominant factor in opinion pieces that were ultimately coded as negative. Another factors, such as blaming the victim or calling the movement a "witch hunt", were all important, when coding the opinion pieces as negative.

¹ "Kõigisse sellistesse juhtumitesse tuleb suhtuda täie tõsidusega. Ajad ja olud on muutunud ja meie koos nendega. Nii Ameerikas kui ka Euroopas julgevad inimesed rääkida, mis nendega on juhtunud. Vabanetakse hoiakust, et ohver on ise süüdi. Sellepärast julgevadki ohvrid vanad ahistamislood päevavalgele tuua." (Sutrop, 2017)

² "Seal ei olnud põhimõtteliselt mitte midagi uudisväärtuslikku, mille üle nii väga kaevata. See tüüp on läinud puhtalt sellepärast seda juttu rääkima BBC-sse, et Spacey asi on üles läinud. Jah, seal on rõvedaid episoodi ka, aga see, mida tema rääkis, ja see, kuidas tema endale kaamera tupp sa, aga come on, see oli lihtsalt külgelöömine. Ma ei tea, kas võiks äkki olla isegi natuke rahul see noormees, et Kevin Spacey talle külge löi," avaldas Nestor arvamust." (Ernits, 2017)

4. Results

Chart 3. and Table 6. show the overall media position towards the #MeToo movement during the time period of October 2017 to December 2018. The findings indicate that the opinion pieces published in the three news sources selected as sources, were mostly positive towards the movement, with 65 articles coded as “positive”, 25 coded as “neutral” and 22 coded as “negative”. Chart 3. Indicates how the coverage changed over time and Table 6. shows the exact distribution of articles by position and time. While the majority of opinion pieces were positive at the beginning of the time period, over time the positive coverage starts to slide, only peaking when there are significant scandals in the public discussion (see Chart 2.).

However, it would not be correct to say that negative positions take over the discussions surrounding the movement, or that is to say that the protest paradigm or nuisance paradigm starts to affect the coverage in a negative manner. Rather, it seems that when positive coverage declines, other coverage declines as well. Sustaining media attention is extremely difficult with rapidly changing news cycles, hence this decline can be considered natural. Moreover, constant coverage can create a situation where all the talking points have been exhaustively stated, to a point, where the demand from the public for such articles wanes. This explains the surges of opinion pieces during new scandals – there are new issues to discuss and dissect, and there is public demand for such content. In addition, these “new” stories tend to take, as the results indicate, a positive stance on the #MeToo movement, as they typically condemn the accused harasser, their acts and they mostly tie these episodes to the #MeToo movement, while reiterating the belief that the victims did the right thing coming forward. The only outlier for this is the “Reinsalu Scandal”, which divided the positions taken in opinion pieces, and in fact the entire Estonian society.

Chart 3. Opinion piece positions towards the #MeToo movement in time.

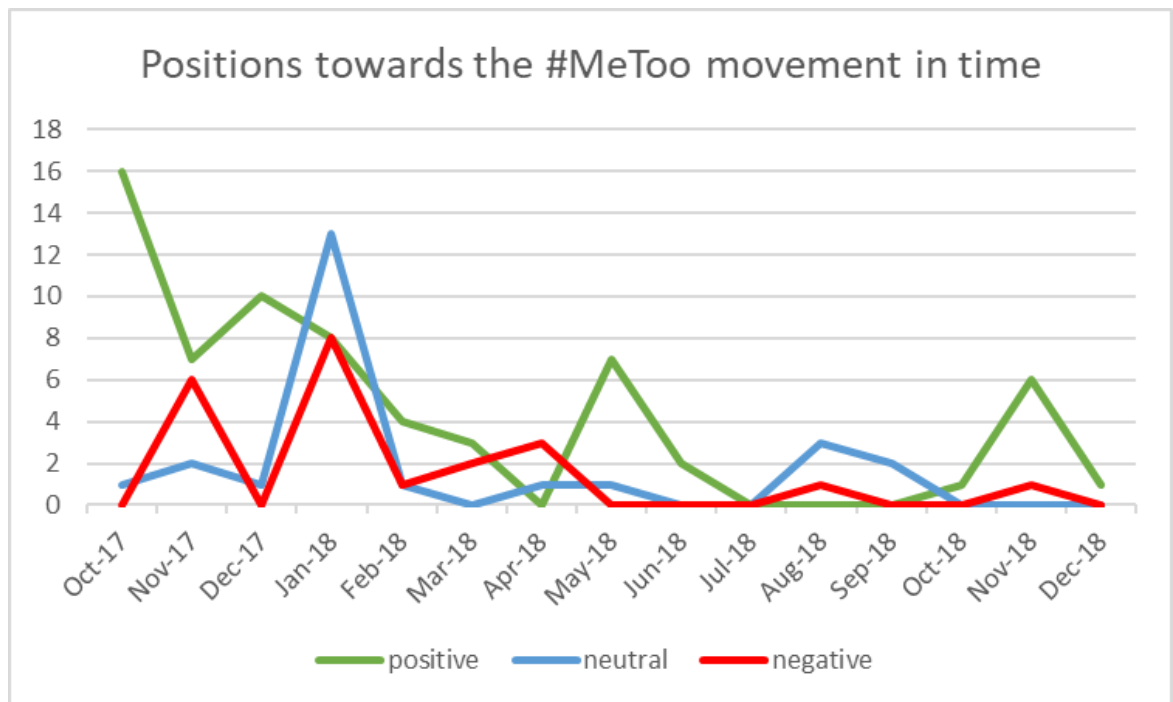


Table 6. Opinion piece positions towards the #MeToo movement in time

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
October 2017	16	1	0
November 2017	7	2	6
December 2017	10	1	0
January 2018	8	13	8
February 2018	4	1	1
March 2018	3	0	2
April 2018	0	1	3
May 2018	7	1	0
June 2018	2	0	0
July 2018	0	0	0
August 2018	0	3	1
September 2018	0	2	0
October 2018	1	0	0
November 2018	6	0	1
December 2018	1	0	0
Total:	65	25	22

4.1. Diagnostic framing of the #MeToo movement

To reiterate Snow & Benford (2000) diagnostic framing applies to the identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality. As the #MeToo movement was rather clearly formed to empower victims of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence to share their stories, the main “problem” (the victims’ silence) is clear. What needs further analysis is, what was framed as the cause of the silence, or who is to blame. Thus, the diagnostic framing for the purpose of this thesis will look more towards the “attribution of blame or causality” side of the equation. The following diagnostic frames were identified from the sample of opinion pieces on the #MeToo movement: victim blaming, questionable motivations, power dynamics, toxic masculinity and end of flirtation frame.

4.1.1. Victim blaming frame

The most common frame that was visible in the analysis of the collected texts, was named the victim blaming frame. Victim blaming has been cast in Estonian media as one of the most impactful reasons, why the victims of harassment and assault do not wish to come forward with their accusations and seek any form of justice available to them. The frame of victim blaming is prevalent in the media when it comes to the #MeToo movement, both in a positive way and a negative way. That is to say that, while there are plenty of instances where victim blaming is framed as an issue that hinders the advancement of #MeToo and lessening sexual violence (this is the more common form of discussion about victim blaming in the sample), there also are instances where the victims are essentially blamed for being harassed in some opinion pieces. To start from the positive usage of the victim blaming frame, many pieces indicate that the Estonian society and culture is perhaps not the most open to the topic of sexual harassment and assault. As the country is small, it is difficult to come out openly with allegations, and keep a modicum of privacy or anonymity afterwards, which could be possible in larger societies and/or communities. Hence, there is much to lose and little to gain for those who might wish to share their

stories and seek appropriate help. All this added to the notion that the topic of sexual harassment and assault is seen as somewhat of a taboo, which has created a negative atmosphere for anyone who tries to come forward with their experiences:

This is the silence culture. It is an atmosphere, where the victim of harassment feels that her/his problem is ignored by default, minimised, excused or worse, is turned against her/him (Velmet, 2018)³

[...] women from smaller places in the USA have not dared to come out with their faces and name, because they are afraid of everything that will ensue in the community. Entire Estonia is a small place. If you accuse, it will become a part of your identity. How to cope with that requires entirely separate and systematic help. No attention has been turned to this in Estonia (Pakosta, 2017).⁴

The opinion pieces that can be categorised as using this frame often claim that the “default” disposition in the society is to not take accusations of sexual harassment and assault seriously. If any accusations are levelled against someone, the accusers are met with intense questioning about their actions and what they could have done to prevent what happened – the focus is not on the perpetrator of these acts as it should be – or they are dismissed instantly. Moreover, when using this frame, attention was drawn to the public ridicule and mocking that often follows when coming forward with sexual harassment or assault allegations. All this creates an environment, where the obligation is on the beleaguered party not to get attacked, which objectively is something they rarely can control. This attitude accuses the victim and, in a way, not the actual perpetrator. Therefore, the societal pressures force people to stay silent.

Taavi Rõivas’ harassment scandal shows, how demeaning to women’s dignity our surrounding and piercing value system is, according to it, sexual crimes against women are always somehow justifiable, understandable, commonplace, explainable, excusable and or easily forgivable. Still through the seemingly unified denunciation the timeworn

³ “Selline ongi vaikimiskultuur. See on õhkkond, kus ahistamise ohvriks langenu tunneb, et tema probleemi eiratakse juba eos, pisendatakse, vabandatakse välja või siis, veelgi hullem, pööratakse tema enda vastu” (Velmet, 2018).

⁴ „[...] USA väiksemate kohtade naised pole sõandanud oma näo ja nimega välja tulla, kuna kardavad kõike, mis sellele kogukonnas järgneb. Terve Eesti on väike koht. Kui kaebad, saab sellest su identiteedi osa. Kuidas sellega toime tulla, nõuab tegelikult eraldi ja süsteemset abi. Eestis pole sellele tähelepanu pööratud.” (Pakosta, 2017).

women blaming and their [social] movement and action restricting: “But why did she do/did not do this or that, go/did not go there”, can be heard (Penu, 2017)⁵

It seems that the larger portion of victims of sexual violence do not want to report the criminal. When looking at the debates about this topic, I, in some ways, also understand the victims. But why did she/he then dress so provocatively? Why did she/he drink so much? Why did she/he even go to that person's home? These are questions that constantly rise as if justifications. Unfortunately. Until the opinions that make the rape victim guilty are given power, there cannot be any desire for those who have experienced violence to tell their stories (Palgi, 2018).⁶

This frame has also been used to draw attention to the fact that not only may the victims be blamed by the society, but they can strongly blame themselves for what happened. This is linked to psychological effects that happen after traumatic events (people try to make sense of everything that has happened, rationalisation) and coping mechanisms afterwards. But also, if the “default” position in the culture is to shift responsibility towards the victim (as indicated above) then people may unconsciously internalise such positions that lead them to self-blame. So, again the hostile cultural atmosphere hinders attempts at speaking out and receiving some justice.

You feel endlessly awful, yet thoughts run through your mind, that maybe I somehow still provoked it, the décolletage was too low-cut, some prior word was too flirty, somehow the other was encouraged, the sip of wine was too much. Perhaps the other did not mean any harm, he liked me and that is how men make compliments – they are not skilled with

⁵ „Taavi Rõivase ahistamiskandaal näitab, kuivõrd naiste inimväärikust alandav on meid ümbritsev ja läbibistav väärtussüsteem, mille järgi naise vastu toime pandud seksuaalkuritegu on alati kuidagimoodi õigustatav, mõistetav, tavaline, selgitatav, välja vabandatav ja/või kergesti andestatav. Ikka kostab pealtnäha ühisest hukkamõistust soo igipõline naisi süüdistav ning nende liikumis- ja tegevusvabadust piirav: „Aga miks ta siis tegi/ei teinud nii ja/või naa, läks/ei läinud sinna või tänna.” (Penu, 2017).

⁶ “Näib olevat nii, et suurem osa seksuaal vägivalla ohvritest ei taha kurjategijat üles anda. Kui vaadata selleteemaliste debattide sisu, mõistan ma mõnes mõttes ka ohvreid. Aga miks ta siis riietus nii väljakutsuvalt? Miks ta jõi nii palju? Miks ta üldse läks selle inimese koju? Need on küsimused, mis alatasa justkui õigustusena üles kerkivad. Kahjuks. Kuni antakse voli arvamustele, mis teevad vägistamisohvrist süüdlase, ei saagi olla vägivalda tunda saanutel tahtmist oma lugu rääkida“ (Palgi, 2018).

words, he does not know any better? And if no physical mark is left then maybe it is not that serious, so why make any fuss? (Konstabel, 2018).⁷

Under no circumstances should one blame themselves about what is happening: I do not know what sins I have committed to earn such treatment. I also hope that not many women remain who abide by the ancient Russian proverb “if he beats you, it means he loves you”. And perhaps they do not also produce as excuses some other arguments – there is nowhere else to live, no money, I love him, the children need a father... (Stepanova, 2017).⁸

As noted already, a small yet visible amount of opinion pieces actually positioned themselves in a manner that essentially ended up blaming the victims for what happened to them. It is not surprising, as if the society truly is prone to victim blaming, it would make sense that some of these sentiments would echo through the opinion pieces. This version of the victim blaming frame focused on either the things that the supposed victims could have done to prevent the situation, or they found that the entire issue of harassment was largely blown out of proportion by the media and the accusers.

If I hoped for the compassion of fellow citizens if, I provoked a drunk man stronger than me and he beat me up then I as a man would be laughed at. [...] I feel my internal control centre and that I myself can significantly affect the situation by avoiding irritation. Women came into the same socialisation environment where men were before and wished to participate on equal grounds, barring out recognising the danger of provocation as a fact. (Vajakas, 2017).⁹

⁷ „Endal on lõpmata nõme olla, aga peas liiguvad mõtted, et aga äkki ikka kuidagi provotseerisin, dekoltee liiga avar, mõni enne öeldud sõna liiga flirtiv, kuidagi sai teist julgustatud, joodud veinilõnks oli liiast. Võibolla teine ei mõelnudki pahasti, ma lihtsalt meeldisin talle, nii teevadki mehed komplimente – neil ju sõnaosavust pole, ta ei oska teisiti? Ja kui mingit püsivat füüsilist märki maha ei jää, siis võibolla pole asi üldse tõsine, milleks kära teha?“ (Konstabel, 2018).

⁸ “Mingil juhul ei tohi süüdistada iseennast: ei tea, mis pattu olen küll teinud, et sellist kohtlemist ära teenida. Loodan samuti, et pole enam jäänud väga palju naisi, kes juhitud iidsest vene vanasõnast „kui peksab, siis armastab“. Ja ehk ei tooda enam vabanduseks ka mingeid muid argumente – pole kuskil elada, pole raha, ma armastan teda, lastele on isa vaja... „ (Stepanova, 2017).

⁹“Kui ma loodaks kaaskodanike kaastundele juhul, kui provotseerisin endast tugevamat purjus meest ja ta andis mulle peksa, siis mind kui meest naerdaks välja. [...] Ma tajun enda sisemist kontrollkeset ja seda, et mina ise saan olukorda väga oluliselt mõjutada, vältides ärritamist. Naised tulid samasse suhtluskeskkonda, kus mehed juba ees olid, ja soovisid osaleda justkui võrdsetel alustel, välja arvatud provotseerimise ohtlikkuse kui tõsiasja tunnistamine..” (Vajakas, 2017).

[Kristiina] Ojuland [an Estonian politician] finds that the harassment story topic is actually something else. “It nevertheless seems more like someone commenting about your short skirt... In general, that would not happen, if women would not give reason for it.” notes Ojuland. [...] “I think that harassment is over-blown drivel. No one is going to put a hand down your pants, if you do not give a reason for it”, stresses Ojuland, yet admits that “perhaps I lack a personal bad experience. Rather these “harassments” have been pleasant” (Tagel, 2018).¹⁰

4.1.2. Questionable motivations frame

The questionable motivations frame suggests that the reason why victims of sexual harassment and assault remain silent, is that as soon as they do speak up, their motivations for doing so are questioned. This frame is somewhat similar to the victim blaming frame, as it implies that the victim is not entirely innocent in what happened, that there are circumstances that make the entire story fairly suspect. Again, as with the victim blaming frame, two types of questionable motivations frame were found within the sample of opinion pieces. First, the “positive” type in relation to the #MeToo movement, brought out the negative effects of said questioning of motives. They often denounced anyone whose default position was to claim that there were some nefarious motivations behind why the victims went to the media. Secondly, the “negative” type was very similar to the “negative” type of the victim blaming frame – that is the frame was used to question the reasons behind victims telling their stories. Opinion pieces that can be categorised under this type, mostly took a pro-accused position.

The starting point of questioning victims’ motivations for sharing their stories, is asking the question: why now. Many critical commentators found it suspect that women suddenly started coming forward after months or even years had passed from the original

¹⁰ “Ojulandi arvates on ahistamislugude teema hoopis teine asi. „See paistab ikkagi rohkem sellena, et kui keegi sind lühikese seeliku pärast kommenteerib... Üldjuhul seda ei juhtuks, kui naised ise selleks põhjust ei annaks,” märgib Ojuland. [...] „Arvan, et ahistamine on üles puhutud jama. Ei pane sulle keegi kätt püksi, kui sa ise põhjust ei anna,” rõhutab Ojuland, ent tunnistas siiski: „Võib-olla mul puudub isiklik halb kogemus. Pigem on need „ahistamised” olnud meeldivad.” (Tagel, 2018).

attack and pondered whether there were some ulterior motives for going on social media or contacting the media to spread their accounts of sexual harassment or assault.

On the other hand, there is something suspicious about the ongoing campaign. It has similarities to religious manifestations, where some spy and others openly confess their sins. Why now and why all at once? (Mutt, 2017).¹¹

These views were swiftly balanced in the opinion pieces by those who sympathised with the victim and that understood why some victims may take considerable time before sharing their stories.

I do not find it difficult to understand, why a woman, whose career depends on her reaction, does not rush instantly to report her perverted boss to the police. Or a woman who bears a drunk friend's lascivious fondling, when she has been taught her all life that women must behave well, smile to boys and when someone pulls her pigtails, to wait for the wedding and the happily ever after (Parksepp, 2017).¹²

Going further with the suspicions that have been noted to surround the #MeToo discussion, the first claim from critical parties is that they are only coming forward to receive some personal gains through the exchange with the media.

Music critic Valner Valmer disclosed that he heard Louis C.K.'s name from a colleague. "I do have an opinion. If someone has a problem, they will go to the police, who has other goals, will go to the media. The going to the media is extremely sick. The explosion [of harassment stories] is the media's fault", thought Valme and added that the numerous accusations have led to stupid things." (Ernits, 2017).¹³

¹¹ "Teiselt poolt on toimuva kampaanialikkuses midagi kahtlast. Sel on sarnasust religioosete ilmingutega, kus ühed nuhivad ja teised avalikult pihivad oma patte. Miks just praegu, miks kõik korraga?" (Mutt, 2017).

¹² "Minul näiteks ei ole raske mõista, miks naine, kelle karjäär sõltub tema reaktsioonist, ei torma esimese hooga oma perverdust ülemust politseisse andma. Või miks naine kannatab ära purjus tuttava nilbed käperdused, kui talle on eluaeg õpetatud, et tüdrukud peavad ilusti käituma, poistele naeratama, ja kui teda patsist sikutatakse, siis on oodata pulmi ja rõõmsat elu aegade lõpuni." (Parksepp, 2017).

¹³ "Muusikakriitik Valner Valme avaldas, et kuulis Louis C.K. nime kolleegilt. "Mul on arvamus olemas küll. Kellel on probleem, see läheb politseisse, kellel on mud eesmärgid, see läheb meediasse. See, et minnakse meediasse, see on ülimalt haige. Lahvatuses on osalt süüdi meedia," arvas Valme ning lisas, et rohked süüdistused on viinud totakate asjadeni." (Ernits, 2017).

How to relate to harassment? Very many people make a career out of it and this is horrific. A position is taken that it is impossible to get over a harassment case. I cannot get over of him putting his hand on my behind! [...] Of course, there are true harassment stories, but there are those who are using this trend. I sincerely feel for the middle-aged white man, who has become today's world's pariah (Alla, 2018).¹⁴

Another alleged motive for coming forward with stories after a long period of silence or in fact at all, was considered to be revenge. Some believed that the women who accused men were either ex-lovers who had their hearts broken and wanted to get even, or that they were politically motivated and wanted to “take down” powerful men. The imagery of witch hunts was invoked often to indicate how innocent men were unjustly punished.

In the case of [Taavi] Rõivas' harassment case people claimed that it was the victims revenge action, that the woman had planned to “take the politician down”. It was asked, why the woman even went to the party and why she consumed alcohol. Some even tried to convince the public that what happened was a “regular Estonian party” where some things happen, “I was also there and nothing really bad happened” (Kiin, 2017).¹⁵

Yes, it is a sad fact that there may always be people who search for opportunities for personal revenge. It is very easy to slander someone maliciously in these he said, she said case. I am reminded of Arthur Miller's famous play “The Crucible”, in which several innocent people were due to false accusations convicted of witchcraft and executed. Also, it is widely known how easy it was to get rid of enemies in totalitarian countries. An anonymous complaint to an appropriate place was enough and a black car would drive to the house (Kivirähk, 2017).¹⁶

¹⁴ “Kuidas suhestuda ahistamisega? Väga paljud inimesed teevad sellest karjääri ja see on õudne. Võetakse hoiak, et ahistamisjuhtumist ei saadagi iial üle. Ma ei saa üle sellest, et mees mulle käe tagumikule pani! [...] Loomulikult on olemas tõelised ahistamislood, aga on ka need, kes seda trendi ära kasutavad. Ma tunnen südamest kaasa keskealisele valgele mehele, kellest on saamas tänapäeva maailma paaria.” (Alla, 2018).

¹⁵ “Rõivase ahistamisjuhtumi puhul väideti, et tegemist on ohvri kätte maksuaktsiooniga, et naisel olnudki plaanis poliitik nii-öelda rajalt maha võtta. Küsiti, miks naine üldse läks sinna peole ja miks ta alkoholi pruukis. Mõni üritas avalikkust veenda, et tegu oli «tavalise eesti peoga», kus ikka ühtteist juhtuvat, «ma olin ka seal ja polnud seal midagi eriti hullu».” (Kiin, 2017).

¹⁶ “Ja kurb tõsiasi on, et alati võib leida inimesi, kes otsivad võimalust isiklikuks kättemaksuks. Selliste sõna-sõna-vastu-juhtumite puhul on ülilihtne kedagi pahatahtlikult laimata. Meenub Arthur Milleri kuulunud näidend „Salemi nõiad”, milles hulk süütuid inimesi valekaebuste põhjal nõidumises süüdi mõisteti ja

A big concern that many in the media had that connects to the overarching motivation questioning tendency, was the fear of false accusations by the accusers. This position hints that there may be a considerable amount of people who in the light of the #MeToo movement saw the media exposure as an opportunity to either receive some sort of personal gains (fame, money etc.) or that they were doing so to “ruin” a man’s life (a jilted lover wanting revenge for example), as discussed above. This fear indicates again the tendency for some people to not take the victims seriously or outright dismiss them in favour of the accused. Again, there were opinion pieces that dismissed the false accusations narrative as an attack mechanism against honest victims, while there also those who felt that false accusations were a serious and recurring issue.

Different methods that have repeatedly been dissected in the media are used ubiquitously – victim blaming, minimising the deed, ignoring, silencing... One accusing method is to label the victim’s claims as lies. It is impossible to read all of the positions from those who are unconnected to the issue yet puff against #MeToo movie industry and our small Estonian scandals, stressing that they are false accusations that ruin a man’s reputation (Cavegn, 2018).¹⁷

Harvey Weinstein is a destroyed man. Kevin Spacey too. Yet, above all, the presumption of innocence is destroyed. There is no court, no accusation, no chance to defend yourself against the accuser(s). One hundred thousand tweets will do the deed and pass a sentence. If Weinstein or Spacey were to complain about it – even if they were able to prove that the accusations were not truthful in the end – what would a court victory give them? (Laur, 2018).¹⁸

hukati. Samuti on üldteada, kui lihtne oli totalitaarsetes riikides vaenlastest vabaneda. Piisas anonüümsest kaebusest sinna, kuhu vaja, ja juba sõitiski maja ette must auto.” (Kivirähk, 2017).

¹⁷ “Levinult kasutatakse erinevaid meedias juba kordi lahatud meetmeid – ohvri süüdistamine, teo vähendamine, eiramine, vaikimine ... Üks süüdistamise viise on tembeldata ohvri väide valeks. Ei jõua ära lugeda neid asjasepuutumatuid, kes #metoo, filmimaailma ja meie väikse Eesti skandaalidele vastu puhkisid, rõhutades, et tegemist on valesüüdistusega, mis rikub mehe maine” (Cavegn, 2018).

¹⁸ “Harvey Weinstein on hävitatud mees. Kevin Spacey samuti. Eelkõige on aga hävitatud süütuse presumptsioon. Ei ole kohut, ei ole süüdistust, ei ole võimalik ennast süüdistaja(te) vastu kaitsta. Sada tuhat säutsu ajab asja ära ja langetab kohe otsuse. Kui Weinstein või Spacey selle peale kaebaksid — isegi kui nad lõpuks suudaksid tõendada, et süüdistused ei vastanud tõele –, mida kohtuvõit neile annaks?” (Laur, 2018).

4.1.3. Power dynamics frame

Feminist movements have for years fought against gender inequalities in the society. Largely these inequalities are due to traditionally imbalanced power relations with in various relationships (i.e. husband and wife), where women are expected to be subservient due to societal norms. Similar power dynamics are visible in professional settings, where there are clear leaders and employees and in certain situations, the power dynamics can manifest themselves in a way, where more dominant people start to take advantage of those who are lower on the proverbial totem pole. The #MeToo movement also pinpointed these corrupted power relations as a cause for sexual harassment. Lest we forget that the movement started spreading after allegations came out after Harvey Weinstein, a powerful man, harassed multiple women, who essentially worked for him. The Estonian media also picked up on this thread and found that one of the problems behind the rampant sexual harassment and assault in the society are power dynamics, which allow for one person to take advantage of another. Many even found that sexuality, in fact, did not have much to do with harassment, rather it was mostly about one person exerting their power over another.

Additionally, lately the examples have indicated that harassment is usually tied to abuse of power or position. The harasser is very often in a favoured position in relation to the victim due to their position, created trust bond or at least simple physical superiority and to connect all responsibility in these cases to the victim's ability to resist, is far too much (Kooli, 2017).¹⁹

Sexual harassment is only sexual in its form. It is connected to power; with it the harasser shows his/her power over another person. However, since sexuality is so personal, so private, the showing of one's power, in this specific form, makes it the most hurtful (Oviir, 2018).²⁰

¹⁹ "Lisaks on viimaste aegade näited osutanud, et on ahistamine tihtipeale seotud võimu- või mõjupositsiooni kuritarvitamisega. Ahistaja on väga sageli ohvri suhtes eelisseisundis kas oma positsiooni, tekitatud usaldussideme või kas või labase füüsilise üleoleku tõttu ning siduda sellisel juhul kogu vastutust ohvri suutlikkusega vastu hakata on liig mis liig." (Kooli, 2017).

²⁰ "Seksuaalne ahistamine on vaid vormiliselt seksuaalne. See on seotud võimuga, sellega näitab ahistaja oma võimu teise inimese üle. Kuna aga seksuaalsus on nii isiklik, nii privaatne, siis just sellises vormis teeb võimu näitamine enim haiget" (Oviir, 2018).

Focusing on the power structures behind harassment, allowed for some writers to frame the #MeToo movement somewhat differently. Their stance was that the #MeToo movement is not a men vs women issue; it is not about feminists trying to take down men. What it is, from their perspective, is a campaign against abuses of power – something that should essentially not be gendered (women can abuse their position against men; men can abuse their position against other men and so forth).

“Intergender war” urge endangered white men. No, it is not a gender question, it is one’s power to do, what he/she wants. Yes, the key question is power, not gender. That most victims are women and harassers men, show just the direction, where more power lies. Lately the New York Times wrote also about sexual exploitation between men, where a professional photographer made unpleasant proposals and male models suffered under harassment, fearing the loss of their jobs (Kuusik, 2018).²¹

Overall, it is important to stress that [the #MeToo movement] is not some women against men movement. It is a movement, which is directed towards those who abuse other people using their physical, economical, societal and political power. That the typical abuser is a man and the typical victim is a woman, is just a reflection of our patriarchal way of life (Uus, 2018).²²

As power imbalances can lead to sexual harassment and assault to begin with, it is also a very effective tool to afterwards pressure the victim into silence, which the #MeToo movement tried to break through. This facet of the power dynamic was also brought out in the opinion pieces.

The [Taavi Rõivas] case is unique, as it shows how cruelly the protagonist of the story can treat someone: first harassing them and then trying to use their power to force them to be silent about it. It show how many of our compatriots do not value protecting other

²¹ ““Sugudevaheline sõda,” utsitavad ohustatud valged mehed. Ei, see pole sooküsimus, see on ühe võim teha, mida ta tahab. Ja võtmeküsimus ongi võim, mitte sugu. See, et enamik kannatajatest on naised ja ahistajatest mehed, näitab lihtsalt kätte suuna, kus rohkem võimu asub. Hiljuti kirjutas New York Times ka meeste vahelisest seksuaalsest ära kasutamisest, kus ebameeldivaid ettepanekuid tegi profifotograaf ja ahistamise käes kannatasid modellid, kartuses töö kaotada.” (Kuusik, 2018).

²² “Üleüldse on tähtis rõhutada, et see pole mingi naised meeste vastu liikumine. See on liikumine, mis on suunatud nende vastu, kes väärkohtlevad teisi inimesi, kasutades oma füüsilist, majanduslikku, ühiskondlikku ja poliitilist võimu. See, et tüüpiliseks väärkohtlejaks on mees ja tüüpiliseks ohvriks naine, on lihtsalt meie patriarhaalse elukorralduse peegeldus.” (Uus, 2018).

people's dignity and freedom from power(ful people). It shows how men view women (Penu, 2017).²³

4.1.4. Toxic masculinity frame

Toxic masculinity is a concept used in gender studies and psychology to denote masculine behaviours that are harmful for the well-being of men and of the society at large. The concept links harmful adherence to gendered traits and norms that young boys learn through socialisation (emotional repression, self-reliance), with “toxic” behaviours that may stem from it. These behaviours may be directed towards themselves – physiological problems like depression, substance abuse, reckless behaviour – or outward towards others – homophobia, misogyny. Furthermore, toxic masculinity is a concept that is often used in concurrence with the concept of rape culture, whereby rape is so pervasive and normalised due to societal attitudes towards gender and sexuality. So, if a man who is “infected” by toxic masculinity finds that he’s dominant over “weak” women that can lead to the said man to behave inappropriately towards women (actions ranging from “harmless” rape jokes and “locker room talk” to sexual assault and rape). Toxic masculinity was also identified as a diagnostic frame in the Estonian media. While not as prevalent as the victim-blaming frame or the questionable motives frame, it is still worth briefly examining, as some points raised are relevant to the prognostic framing discussed below (in relation to men’s role in breaking through the silence surrounding sexual harassment and assault and why men may choose to be silent).

Masculinity is a norm, around which the entire life of a boy revolves. Primarily it is defined through contrasting it to femininity: you are a broad or a girl if you show sensitivity, as it is immediately associated with femininity and weakness. However, the boy is allowed to be aggressive, it is even encouraged. Secondly, if a boy differs from the mass then he is immediately in the eyes of his peers a fag, softie, gay – or the minority.

²³ “Juhtum on erakordne, sest näitab, kui julmalt võib loo peategelane kedagi kohelda: kõigepealt teda ahistades ja seejärel püüdes mõjuvõimu kasutades teda sellest vaikima sundida. See näitab, kui paljud meie kaaskondlased ei pea teise inimese väärkuse ja vabaduse võimu(kama) eest kaitsmist sugugi esmatähtsaks. See näitab, mismoodi näevad mehed naisi.” (Penu, 2017).

Differences are seen as a weakness and they are spurned. Unwritten rules govern men's world, out of which one is the principle of strength and unbreakableness, the second however is: if you are not with us then you are against us. Or maintaining a different position than the mass (the clique, age peers, work and training partners, friends etc.) and being different, means ridicule and exclusion. You will be alone (Talviste, 2017).²⁴

Traditional gender roles alas do not mean only opening doors and gifting flowers, but also the creation of the tough man façade. The latter expects that you cannot show your emotions. Unfortunately, it has a negative effect on men's physical and mental health. If since childhood it is told "do not cry, you are already a big man" then they do not learn to express their emotions. It is also tied to depression and a larger chance that they will start to use narcotics. These factors together predispose violence (Lippus, 2017).²⁵

4.1.5. End of flirtation frame

The last diagnostic frame that was found during the analysis is the end flirtation frame. While not as prevalent as any of the other diagnostic frame, flirtation as a common step in building romantic relationships or other sexual encounters, was mentioned often enough in relation to the #MeToo movement that it warranted being brought out. Two forms of invoking this frame were identified in the various texts. The first found that the cause for many uncomfortable encounters that for one party may seem like sexual harassment come from miscommunication during the so-called flirtation stage – men and

²⁴ "Mehelikkus on norm, mille ümber hakkab keerlema kogu poisi elu. Eelkõige defineeritakse seda läbi naiselikkusele vastandumise: sa oled eit või plika, kui sa näitad välja oma tundlikkust, sest seda seostatakse otsejoones naiselikkusega ja nõrkusega. Küll aga on poisile lubatud agressiivsus, seda isegi ergutatakse. Teiseks: kui poiss erineb massist, on ta eakaaslaste silmis kohe pede, pehmo, homo – ehk vähemus! Erinevusi nähakse nõrkusena ja neid tõrjutakse. Meeste maailmas kehtivad kirjutamata reeglid, millest üks on tugevuse ja murdumatuse printsiip, teine aga: kui sa pole meie poolt, siis oled sa meie vastu. Ehk massist (kamp, eakaaslased, töö- ja trennikaaslased, sõbrad jne) erinevale seisukohale jäämine ning eristumine tähendab häbistamist ja väljaarvamist. Sa jääd üksi." (Talviste, 2017).

²⁵ "Traditsioonilised soorollid ei tähenda paraku ainult uste avamist ning lillede kinkimist, vaid ka karmi mehe fassaadi loomist. Viimane eeldab, et oma emotsioone ei tohi välja näidata. Paraku on sellel negatiivne mõju meeste füüsilisele ja vaimsele tervisele. Kui lapsepõlvest saati öeldakse "Ära nuta, sa oled juba suur mees," siis ei õpita oma emotsioone väljendama. See on aga muuhulgas seotud depressiooni ja suurema võimalusega, et hakatakse tarvitama mõnuaineid. Need tegurid koos soodustavad vägivalda." (Lippus, 2017).

women may express their romantic or sexual interest in different ways and these differences can be off-putting to the other. The following quote indicates this, yet note the subtle victim blaming language used (the victim could and should have said no but did not!).

Most contacts in bars, parties, beaches that have ended unpleasantly, are due to the inability or unknowingness to say “no” at the flirtation level. So, self-justification comes in to play – why did she then have such a décolletage, or why did she wear a skirt so short, why did she look at me with an inviting gaze etc. In this sense, sensual dancing has the biggest danger of giving a misleading signal (Ots, 2017).²⁶

The other manifestation of the said frame had little to do with the causes of sexual harassment or the silence surrounding it, rather it discussed the potential negative effects of the #MeToo movement on gender relations, with the fear being that the #MeToo wants to essentially ban flirtation and with that limit “normal” relations between men and women. This view somewhat harkens back to the theoretical background of feminist movements, which found that movements that “seem to” threaten existing gender norms can receive considerably more kick back from the society (Marx Ferree & McClurg Mueller, 2004: 596). While the #MeToo does not intend to change for example women’s role within the family structure, some may easily frame the movement as an attack on the status quo of romantic/sexual relations. These fears were present in the media: they were expressed by both men and women (see the so-called Catherine Deneuve letter), but also rebuttals for these fears were given, as with other critical comments towards the #MeToo movement (some of which already discussed above under other frames).

[I read] that French actress Catherine Deneuve criticised the witch hunts or new puritanism accompanying sexual harassment scandals, because men do not dare to flirt anymore and that in her opinion hinders normal communication between men and women

²⁶ “Enamik ebameeldivalt lõppenud kontakte baaris, peol, rannas ongi tingitud oskamatusesest või taipamatusesest flirdi tasandil «ei» öelda. Nii tulebki mängu eneseõigustus – miks tal siis selline dekoltee oli või miks ta nii lühikest seelikult kandis, miks ta mind nii kutsuva pilguga vaatas jne. Liibuvas tantsimises on selles mõttes kõige suurem oht eksitavat signaali anda.” (Ots, 2017)

and sexual freedoms. So, luckily there are differing dispositions. However, Deneuve represents the old school (Mäe, 2018).²⁷

Men complain in unison – can we not flirt anymore either? Do I have to ask permission for everything? If a person cannot make a difference between flirting and sexual harassment, then definitely yes! (Viik, 2017).²⁸

No, there is no need to ban or regulate flirting. But what is necessary, is to understand, what the other person wants. I can try to theoretically imagine that for someone, unexpected groping on a trolleybus is something akin to fliting and is pleasant. Yes, go ahead, it is not my business to stigmatise anyone's preferences. For another this is unacceptable. And this is where the line goes. #MeToo is not about demanding special treatment, it is demanding a safe environment. Where one can in addition freely flirt, have sex and wear what they want (Kuusik, 2018).²⁹

4.2. Prognostic and motivational framing of the #MeToo movement

Prognostic framing contains the proposed solutions to the identified problems (from the diagnostic framing) and the indication of strategies, goals, etc. Motivational framing provides the rationale for action. From the coverage of the #MeToo movement in the Estonian media, it seems that these two types of frames more or less combined into one visible overarching frame – the breaking the silence frame. From the perspective of prognostic framing, the breaking the silence frame indicated that the solution for the problem of sexual harassment and assault would be to stop 1) ignoring the issue and 2)

²⁷ “Paar päeva hiljem lugesin, et Prantsuse näitlejanna Catherine Deneuve kritiseeris seksuaalse ahistamise skandaalidega kaasnenud nõiajahti ehk uuspuritaanlust, sest mehed ei julge enam flirtidagi, ja see pärsib tema hinnangul naiste ja meeste vahelist normaalset suhtlemist ning seksuaalset vabadust. Nii et õnneks leidub ka teistsugust suhtumist. Ent see Deneuve esindab pigem vana koolkonda.” (Mäe, 2018)

²⁸ “Mehed kurdavad kooris - kas nüüd enam ei või flirtida ka? Kas ma pean nüüd igaks asjaks luba küsima? Kui inimene ei suuda vahet teha flirtimise ja seksuaalse ahistamise vahel, siis igal juhul jah!” (Viik, 2017).

²⁹ “Ei, ei ole vaja flirti ära keelata või reguleerida. Aga on vaja saada aru, mida teine inimene tahab. Ma võin püüda teoreetiliselt ette kujutada, et ühe jaoks võib ootamatu käperdamine trollibussis olla midagi flirditaolist ja meelitavat. Jah, palun, pole minu asi kellegi eelistusi stigmatiseerida. Teise jaoks on see vastuvõetamatu. Ja siit lähebki piir. #metoo ei ole erikohtlemise nõudmine, see on turvalise keskkonna nõue. Kus saab muu hulgas vabalt flirtida, seksida ja kanda, mida tahad.” (Kuusik, 2018).

staying silent. From the perspective of motivational framing victims were encouraged to come forward and share their stories, as openly talking about the issue would help to prevent similar acts from happening in the future.

4.2.1. Breaking the silence frame

As stated already in the theoretical section, the initial and perhaps the primary goal of the #MeToo movement was to provide a community of support for survivors of sexual assault and violence, through breaking the stigma and the circle of silence that surrounds sexual violence. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that the most common strategy offered up in the media to tackle the issue of sexual harassment and violence in Estonian society was to come forward and share the stories and if needed seek out help from appropriate channels.

Estonian women should stop this silence and start talking about what is really happening, bring out the stories (Jaakson, 2017).³⁰

In the earliest days of the #MeToo movement in Estonia, many women did so. Most took to their personal social media accounts to share their stories using the hashtag, others who had access to other media channels, used this, and shared their personal stories in opinion pieces. By doing so, they explicitly participated in the movement, and showed to a larger audience the importance of breaking the silence.

To be honest, all of the harassment stories over the past week have been absolutely exhausting, but still, here is a topic, of which all silence should be disallowed. We do not have to, or in fact should not classify such incidents under normal bad experiences. Me too. Yes, it has happened to me. Repeatedly. (Ruul, 2017)³¹

³⁰ “Eesti naised võiksid selle vaikimise lõpetada ja hakata rääkima, mis meil tegelikult toimub, tuua välja need lood” (Jaakson, 2017).

³¹ “Ausalt öeldes on ahistamisjuhtudest viimase nädala jooksul mõõt absoluutselt täis saanud, aga siinkohal on siiski tegemist teemaga, mille puhul igasugune vaikimine keelatud peaks olema. Me ei pea ega tohigi taolisi juhtumeid normaalsete halbade kogemuste sekka lahterdada. Me too. Jah, see on ka minuga juhtunud. Korduvalt” (Ruul, 2017).

Thus, #MeToo. Me Too. [...] [S]ocietal change will happen only if, besides silent condemnation, we also give sexual harassment a face. The nameless lack the power to change anything, but we are not nameless and faceless. We have names and faces and we all want the same thing – that our bodily autonomy is accepted, that men are not reduced to animal-like monstrosities, who cannot resist their urges, that we really are equal. And that sexual harassment would be unanimously condemned (Lamp, 2017).³²

The invoking of men in the frame of breaking the silence, as shown in the quote above, was relatively common within this frame. In fact, in the first month of the selected time period (October 2017), there was a fairly long and substantive discussion in the media about men's role in remedying the widespread issue of sexual harassment and sexual violence in general in the Estonian society. The question that started the discussion was posed by a psychologist Kätlin Konstabel – why are men so deafeningly silent when it comes to harassment?

No, not all men are silent. In relation to sexual harassment and assault, it has been possible to read statements from supposedly respected people about rutting mares and stallions, tango dancing and that women always blame men about everything, the “facts” that women never care about. But there are a lot of nice, good, smart men too. Where are they? (Konstabel, 2017).³³

Many following opinion pieces pondered over this question and offered their takes on the issue. For example, perhaps the most cynical point of view given, was that men simply do not care about the issue. Since mostly the victims of such crimes are women then it is “easy” for men to relegate these issues to “women's issues” that are of little consequence to them, and hence not take any interest in participating in solving the problem.

Until the victim, that is the woman, is in the focus, then the harassment topic is automatically classified in many men's brains as a women's topic (like children, home

³² „Seega. #Metoo. Mina ka. [...] ainult nii muutub ühiskonnas midagi, kui me anname lisaks vaiksele hukkamõistule ka seksuaalse ahistamisele näo. Nimetutel puudub jõud midagi muuta, aga me ei ole nimetud ja näotud. Meil on nimed ja näod ja me tahame ju kõik ühte asja – et meie kehade autonoomiat aktsepteeritaks, et mehi ei taandataks loomaliikeks monstroidideks, kes ei suuda oma ihadele vastu panna, et me päriselt olekski võrdsed. Ja et seksuaalne ahistamine oleks üheselt hukka mõistetud“ (Lamp, 2017).

³³ Ei, mitte kõik mehed pole vaiksed. Seksuaalse ahistamise ja rünnakutega seoses on saanud lugeda justkui lugupeetud inimeste mõtteavaldusi indlevatest märadest ja täkkudest, tango tantsimisest ikka kahekesi ja et naised süüdistavad alati kõiges mehi, „asjaolud“ naisi kunagi ei huvita. Aga on ju palju toredaid, häid, tarku mehi ka. Kus nemad on? (Konstabel, 2017).

and social work), which is quickly organised to the insignificant borderland. Actually, it is a man's topic, as if we talk about violence targeted against women, children and also other men, then we mostly talk about men who have carried through these acts. A very important question remains unnoticed: what is happening to men in the society? (Talviste, 2017).³⁴

The lack of a safe space for talking about the issue was brought out – or that men may fear the backlash they might receive, if they happen to misspeak or inadvertently offend someone.

You must begin where you are. If men do not find the topic important, because even thinking about it is too scary, or they find it so important that thinking about it is too scary, then we could start from creating a safe environment for speaking. Everyone, regardless of their gender, can help to create such an environment, if only they think it is important. It is safe to speak in an environment, where differing opinions can be expressed, where mistakes are allowed, where opinions can change during a discussion, where no one is denounced as a person or excluded from the group due to an inaccurate belief (Jürjen, 2017).³⁵

This fear of a backlash from the public connects well with the toxic masculinity frame discussed above, which stated that entrenched gender norms can prevent men from breaking away from the silent (or even critical) mass due to the fear of being castigated or labelled as something negative by their male peer group.

Masculinity is a social status, which is validated by other men. They can recognise you or not – no one gets a lifelong guarantee. The question is not whether you are man enough in the eyes of women but are you man enough for other men. The weaker the man's

³⁴ “Nii kaua kuni fookuses on ohver ehk naine, liigitub ka ahistamise teema paljude meeste ajudes automaatselt naiste teemaks (nagu lapsed, kodu ja sotsiaaltöö), mis organiseeritakse kiiresti ebaolulisele äärealale. Tegelikult on see meeste teema, sest kui me räägime naiste, laste ja ka teiste meeste vastu suunatud vägivallast, ahistamisest, vägistamisest, siis me räägime ju valdavalt meestest, kes neid asju korda saadavad. Tähelepanuta jääb väga oluline küsimus: mis toimub ühiskonnas meestega?” (Talviste, 2017).

³⁵ “Alustada tuleb sealt, kus ollakse. Kui mehed ei pea teemat oluliseks, sest sellest isegi mõelda on liiga hirmus, või peavad nii oluliseks, et sellest isegi mõelda on liiga hirmus, siis alustada võiks kõnelemiseks turvalise keskkonna loomisest. Sellise keskkonna loomisele saab kaasa aidata igaüks hoolimata soost, kui ta seda vaid tähtsaks peab. Turvaline on rääkida keskkonnas, kus avaldada saab erinevaid arvamusi, kus tohib eksida, kus arvamused võivad arutelu käigus muutuda, kus kedagi ei mõisteta inimesena hukka või grupist välja ka eksliku arusaama pärast.” (Jürjen, 2017)

internal self, the more he is influenced by the mass, the more loyal he is to pack mentality and he will not dare to counteract. And if his friend is demeaning towards women, offends the gays etc. he will not say anything, laugh along or act like that he did not see or hear anything. Silent bystanders are formed like this, who do not attack themselves or are not victims, but with their silence support the continuation of degenerate behaviour. With silence he confirms: I am not against you; thus, I am with you (Talviste, 2017).³⁶

Another reasoning given for men's silence connected to the toxic masculinity frame, claimed that men's upbringing has given them a limited ability to express emotions or handle delicate issues with care.

Men's ability to deal with delicate and emotion filled problems is lacking, because often they have not had enough experience in the area. How often have fathers said to their sons the following: "I am sorry that I hurt you today" or "I acted wrongly" or "it was my mistake and I must take responsibility for it"? How often are boys praised for admitting their mistakes? (Jürjen, 2017)³⁷

Nevertheless, all possible causes for men's silence on the topic set aside, a position that rang through many of the opinion pieces that tackled this question, was that men have an important role in if not solving then at least lessening the issue of sexual harassment and assault and the circle of silence that surrounds it. Referring back to Gamson (2004) this approach makes sense in the context of the three framing tasks that social movements must content within the mass media arena, whereby one of the tasks is increase mobilisation potential among bystanders. Women by themselves cannot solve the issue of sexual harassment and silencing the victims in the society. They need allies from men,

³⁶ "Mehelikkus on sotsiaalne staatus, mida valideerivad teised mehed. Nad võivad sind tunnustada või ka mitte – eluaegset garantiid ei saa keegi. Ehk küsimus pole selles, kas sa oled naise silmis piisavalt mees, vaid kas sa oled teiste meeste meelest piisav. Mida nõrgem on mehe sisemine mina, seda enam on ta mõjutatud massist, seda lojaalsem on ta karjamentaliteedile ega julge vastanduda. Ja kui tema sõber käitub naistega alandavalt, solvab geisid vms, siis ei ütle ta midagi, naerab kaasa või teeb nägu, et ei kuulnud ega näinud. Nii kujunevad neist vaikivad kõrvalseisjad, kes ise ei ründa ega ole ka ohvrid, ent oma vaikimisega toetavad nad hálbinud käitumise jätkumist. Vaikimisega kinnitab ta: ma pole sinu vastu, järelikult olen sinu poolt." (Talviste, 2017)

³⁷ "Meeste oskus delikaatseid ja tunderohkeid probleeme käsitleda on tihti vähene, sest sageli pole nad saanud piisavalt harjutada. Kui palju ütlevad isad poegadele järgmist: „Mul on kahju, et ma Sulle täna liiga tegin“ või „Ma käitusin valesti.“ või „See oli minu viga ja ma pean selle eest vastutuse võtma.“? Kui sageli kiidetakse poissi vea tunnistamise eest?" (Jürjen, 2017)

who could support them, but may have chosen to stay silent on the topic for whatever reasons.

I believe in collective responsibility. Us, men, do not have to separately feel guilty for the actions of harassers of our gender, but we are responsible for the continuation of harassment or not. Not just through our own actions. If we do not react to any form of harassment, in any other way than embarrassing silence, then we create conditions for its continuation (Kooli, 2017).³⁸

In fact, everyone regardless of gender were urged to “wake up” and notice the harassment and violence happening in the society. Some felt that, the Estonian society tends to turn a blind eye to these issues, and this makes it more difficult for victims to come forward, get justice and heal. The societal neglect towards the issue may then make women lose faith in the hope that things could get better – why come forward, if no one is going to help you and nothing good comes from it. It is better to cultivate coping strategies that help to lessen the trauma.

We all have to open our eyes and look around. We have become disinterested. If we see, how a man expresses themselves brutally towards a woman, we lower our eyes and keep walking on. Hearing how the neighbour screams out through the wall, we wince and turn up the volume on the television. The most important thing is to notice the problems and do something about them (Stepanova, 2017).³⁹

On a group level it seems that in societies and countries, where women lack real trust that things will get better for them in the near future, it is safer to focus on developing coping strategies, out of which the most effective seem to be various versions of denial and minimising. In the context on #MeToo we see that in every strongly patriarchal society, including the former Eastern Block countries. Inevitably, it seems that the

³⁸ “Küll aga usun ma kollektiivsesse vastutusse. Meie, mehed, ei pea küll igäüks eraldi ennast meie soost ahistajate tegude pärast süüdi tundma, aga meie vastutame selle eest, kas ahistamine jätkub või mitte. Mitte ainult iseenda käitumise kaudu. Kui me ei reageeri mis tahes moel eksisteerivale ahistamisele muu kui piinliku vaikusega, loome me eeldused selle jätkumiseks.” (Kooli, 2017).

³⁹ “Meil kõigil tuleb silmad avada ja ringi vaadata. Oleme muutunud ükskõikseks. Nähes, kuidas mees naise suhtes jõhkralt väljendub, langetame silmad ja kõnnime edasi. Kuuldes, kuidas naabrinna seina taga karjub, krimpsutame nägu ja keerame teleril heli valjemaks. Kõige tähtsam on probleeme märgata ja midagigi ette võtta” (Stepanova, 2017).

infamous Estonian woman's toughness is actually a surrender to the realisation that "life just is like this" and it is better to at least put on a good face while playing a bad game (Uus, 2018).⁴⁰

Even though there may be considerable obstacles on the road, the importance of the opportunities for discussion about sexual harassment and assault that #MeToo movement created and its message of support was felt. Ultimately, the prognostic frame of breaking the silence maintained the great importance of just talking openly about the issue and not letting fear, taboo, or any other societal pressure silence victims. Although, the decision to come forward is in the end highly personal (and the victim can choose to not discuss their experiences should they wish to do so), most opinion pieces encouraged it and through their positive disposition they perhaps tried to combat some negative positions held in the society.

Publicly talking about sexual harassment helps to prevent and impede new harassment cases, suffering and fears. (Albrant, 2017)⁴¹

Rome was not built in a day and today's society has also a long road to go to achieve social and political equality between the genders. Still, we are surrounded by phenomenal and fearless people, who say "No" to shame and fear and bravely stand for everyone's rights. Media gives us wonderful tools for fighting against injustice and through that evolve into a society, where all members feel a responsibility before themselves and others to behave morally and benevolently (Suits, 2018).⁴²

⁴⁰ "Aga grupi tasemel jääb mulje, et kogukondades ja riikides, kus naistel puudub reaalne usk, et asjad lähemas tulevikus nende jaoks paranevad, on ohutum keskenduda toimetulekustrateegiate arendamisele, millest kõige efektiivsemad tunduvad olevad eituse ja pisendamise mitmesugused versioonid. #metoo kontekstis näeme seda kõigis tugevalt patriarhaalsetes ühiskondades, sh endise idabloki maades. Paratamatult jääb mulje, et see kurikuulus eesti naise kangus on tegelikult allaandmine tõdemusele, et «elu on kord juba selline» ja parem on lihtsalt halva mängu juures head nägu teha." (Uus, 2018)

⁴¹ "Seksuaalsest ahistamisest avalikult rääkimine aitab ennetada ja ära hoida uusi ahistamisjuhtumeid, kannatusi ja hirme" (Albrant, 2017)

⁴² "Roomat ei ehitatud päevaga ja ka tänapäeva ühiskonnal on pikka maa sugude vahelise sotsiaalse ja poliitilise võrdsuseni. Siiski, meie ümber leidub fenomenaalseid ja kartmatuid inimesi, kes ütlevad "Ei" häbile ja hirmule ning astuvad julgel sammul kõigi õiguste eest välja. Meedia annab meile imelisi vahendeid, et ülekohtule vastu astuda ja areneda seeläbi ühiskonnaks, mille kõik liikmed tunnevad enda ning teiste ees vastutust käituda moraalselt ja heasoovlikult." (Suits, 2018)

Due to the results of the frame analysis hypothesis 1: *The #MeToo movement will be framed predominantly in a negative manner* is rejected. The large majority of opinion pieces on the movement and its surrounding issues were mostly positive. This is also apparent in the framing of the movement. The different diagnostic and prognostic frames indicate that these three news outlets framed the #MeToo movement as an important and significant societal force. The causes for sexual harassment and sexual violence and the silence that follows (the diagnostic frames), were clearly pinpointed and framed in a supportive way to the movement. If any opinion pieces questioned the victims (victim blaming, questioning the motives frames) then they were followed by rebuttals. Similarly, one clear prognostic frame was found that coincided with the movement's primary goal, this for the most part, encouraged the victims to come forward and applauded those who already had.

4.3. The political response to the #MeToo movement

Table 7. shows the discussion of #MeToo related topics in the *Riigikogu*. As stated already in the overview of data section, no explicit references to the #MeToo movement were made in the *Riigikogu*, hence other keywords (“harassment”, “violence against women”, “domestic violence”, “rape” and “sexual violence”) were searched for and any statements that referred to any of these words were marked as #MeToo adjacent statements. This search yielded results from 13 different sittings. To reiterate overall during this time period 197 sessions were held (see Table 5.) Statements were counted every time a parliamentarian spoke and referenced anything related to the #MeToo movement. Mostly, there was only one #MeToo related statement made by one parliamentarian during a sitting, however in a few instances more statements were made. Hence, in those cases, if one member of the parliament (or a minister) spoke multiple times, each of their statements were counted separately. This generated a total of 80 #MeToo adjacent statements in the parliament over the period of October 2017 to December 2018.

Table 7. Discussion of #MeToo related topics in the Parliament

Session date	Session type	#MeToo adjacent statements
16.10.2017	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i> : interpellations and unscheduled statements)	1
14.12.2017	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	1
17.01.2018	Question Time	2
24.01.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	52
24.01.2018	Question Time	8
08.03.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	7
08.05.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	1
06.06.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	1
07.06.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	2
13.06.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	1
22.08.2018	Extraordinary session	1
17.10.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	2
15.11.2018	Sitting of the <i>Riigikogu</i>	1
TOTAL:		80

Source: Riigikogu stenogrammid: <http://stenogrammid.riigikogu.ee/>

Out of the 13 sittings 10 had only one or two mentions to any #MeToo related keywords. These statements had in reality little to nothing to do with discussing the situation of sexual harassment and assault in Estonia or offering political solutions for combating the issue – during these 10 sittings there is no attempts to set the political agenda to tackle the issue of sexual harassment. Hence, it can be said that there was no coherent attempts to frame the issue in any way. What brief mentions can be seen are: 1) comments about political scandals that are connected to the #MeToo movement (1 about T. Rõivas and 2 about U.Reinsalu – albeit none of the statements show any concern for the victims, rather they seem like attempts to attack the offender politically), 2) indications that one of the side effects of the great alcohol problem in the society is domestic violence, 3) three statements about funding various women’s support programmes and 4) other miscellaneous comments that mention one of the keywords, yet do not have anything

substantive to say about the issue. Overall, these statements by parliamentarians are few and far between to indicate any impact of the #MeToo movement on the working of the *Riigikogu*.

*I have the honour to give the Prime Minister Jüri Ratas an interpellation on the behalf of Conservative People's Party of Estonia. It is about Taavi Rõivas' harassment case that happened during the Enterprise Estonia delegations visit. Our questions touch upon EAS. [...] How do you respond to EAS's statement that they are still willing to henceforth take Taavi Rõivas, who acted undignifiedly and harmed Estonia's reputation, into their delegations? – H. Põlluaas (EKRE), 16.10.2017.*⁴³

*[...] Consuming alcohol has not in reality decreased, it has remained practically the same, or slightly, even one point of a percentage risen due to cross-border trade. Still, we give away money, but deal with the expenses and consequences here. Alcohol consumption is accompanied by for example health costs and everything else, like criminal activity, domestic violence. [...] – M. Haukanõmm (VABA), 13.06.2018.*⁴⁴

*Personally, I want to stress that 1,5 million will be added for combating violence against women and promoting fair treatment. This also shows that we are moving towards a society that is in every person's, be they strong or weak, views smarter, safer and fairer. – L. Oviir (SDE), 08.05.2018.*⁴⁵

The 08.03.2018 sitting of the parliament was dedicated to the topic of the development trends of criminal policy. Even though, for the most part the sitting devoted its time to other issues (drug and alcohol policy, traffic crimes, law enforcement institutions etc.), as it was International Women's Day and the Minister of Justice, Urmas Reinsalu, was

⁴³ “Mul on au Eesti Konservatiivse Rahvaerakonna fraktsiooni nimel üle anda arupärimine peaminister Jüri Ratasele. See on Ettevõtluse Arendamise Sihtasutuse delegatsiooni visiidi käigus toimunud Taavi Rõivase ahistamisjuhtumi kohta. Meie küsimused puudutavad EAS-i. [...] Kuidas te suhtute EAS-I avaldusse, et nad on ka edaspidi valmis võtma delegatsiooni koosseisu Taavi Rõivase, kes käitus ebaväärikalt ja kahjustas Eesti mainet?” (Põlluaas, 2017).

⁴⁴ “Alkoholi tarbimine ei ole reaalselt vähenenud, see on jäänud praktiliselt samaks või natukene, protsendipunktikese isegi tõusnud piiriülese kaubanduse tõttu. Samas, me anname raha ära, aga nende kulude ja tagajärgedega tegeleme meie siin. Alkoholi tarbimisega kaasnevad näiteks tervisekulud ja kõik muu, näiteks kriminaalkuritegevus, lähisuhtevägivald.” (Haukanõmm, 2018).

⁴⁵ “Isiklikult tahan veel rõhutada, et naistevastase vägivalla vastu võitlemiseks ja võrdse kohtlemise edendamiseks tuleb juurde 1,5 miljonit. Ka see näitab, et me liigume selles suunas, et meie ühiskond oleks iga inimese, nii tugevama kui ka nõrgema arvates targem, turvalisem ja ka õiglasem” (Oviir, 2018)

present to answer questions, some statements and questions were made about domestic violence, sexual harassment and the minister's scandal. Whether the 7 statements made about topics connected to the #MeToo movement were in reality influenced or spurred on by the movement is nevertheless questionable. It seems more likely that because it was the International Women's Day, slightly more focus was on crime that impacts women than usually – this is even apparent in the way some of the statements are presented, they stress the date as the reason for their question.

[...] But in the context of today's women's day, I will ask the following. Total number of crimes in Estonia is 26 000 and there are 2600 domestic violence cases, but only one in ten victims turn to the police. Thus, if they all did, the number of crimes would be double, around 50 000. What would you [U.Reinsalu] say to women in the context of today's women's day, is it worth going to the police? [...] - P. Ernits (EKRE), 08.03.2018.⁴⁶

[...] We lately had a case, where the Minister of Justice announced that he regretted that he had ever denounced violence against women. I think it was very unpleasant and very unfitting for the Minister of Justice [...] – V. Randpere (REF), 08.03.2018.⁴⁷

Really, the number of domestic violence cases has fallen, yet the number of murders or attempts of murders have risen. It is also remarkable that restraining orders were violated 2,5 times more than in 2016. In Pärnu, a principle is being piloted that in cases of violence, the offender is removed from the home and the victim stays at home. The principle is in itself entirely correct and logical, but how is the victim's safety guaranteed, when the attacker is released? What has been planned to make violating restraining orders more difficult? – L. Kersna (REF), 08.03.2018.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ “Aga tänase naistepäeva kontekstis küsin järgmist. Kuritegude arv Eestis on 26 000 ja koduvägivallajuhtumeid on 2600, aga ainult iga kümnes ohver pöördub politsei poole. Järelikult, kui nad kõik pöörduksid, oleks kuritegude arv poole suurem, 50 000 ringis. Mida te tänase naistepäeva kontekstis naistele ütleksite, kas tasub üldse politsei poole pöörduda?” (Ernits, 2018).

⁴⁷ “Meil oli hiljuti juhtum, kui justiitsminister teatas, et ta kahetseb, et ta on kunagi hukka mõistnud naistevastase vägivalla. Minu meelest oli see väga ebameeldiv ja justiitsministrile väga ebasobiv.” (Randpere, 2018).

⁴⁸ “Tõesti, lähisuhtevägivalla kuritegude arv on langenud, samas on tapmiste ja tapmiskatsete arv kasvanud. Tähelepanuväärne on ka see, et 2,5 korda rohkem kui 2016. aastal oli lähenemiskeeldude rikkumisi. Pärnus piloteeritakse põhimõtet, et vägivallajuhtumi korral eemaldatakse kodust vägivallatseja ja ohver jääb koju. Põhimõtte ise on ju väga õige ja loogiline, aga kuidas tagatakse ohvri turvalisus siis, kui vägivallatseja on vabastatud? Mida plaanitakse teha selleks, et lähenemiskeeldu oleks raskem rikkuda?” (Kersna, 2018).

Perhaps the only real instance where the #MeToo movement can be somehow connected to parliamentary procedures during this time period, is the 24.01 sitting and question time, the day where the Minister of Justice, Urmas Reinsalu, faced a vote of no confidence due to his controversial opinion piece on a matter that is in a roundabout way tied to the #MeToo movement. And yet, although these two sittings saw the most statements (60) on issues related to violence against women, they all were questions to the Minister about his statements, behaviour and whether he regretted them and not attempts to set the agenda, pass some policy on the issue and so forth. Furthermore, the line of questioning that the Minister face was rather repetitive, so while the number of statements grew, the questions remained more or less the same and hence the answers were similar as well. The following is an excerpt of the line of questioning that exemplifies the typical questions and answers on this topic (the Minister was also questioned about his other decision and action that were not related to the #MeToo movement):

You are the Minister of Justice, you are a government official, who is directly responsible for preventing violence. But now you have gotten into a values conflict. I am not talking about how you worded your texts and afterwards refute them with apologies. I maintain that you tried to cut a political profile from main values. Minister of Justice and regret about denouncing violence – these things do not go together. Can we, in principle, trust a minister that has gotten into a value conflict like this? – J. Jaanson (REF), 24.01.2018.⁴⁹

If my position would have been that I justify violence, if I expressed ambiguous positions towards violence or what state institutions feel about it, then naturally a Minister of Justice like that could not be trusted under rule of law. I made one statement. I have discussed its context and idea and will not spend more time on it now. [...] But I want to reiterate that I am on the same side in the fight against preventing violence as you and other fair people, who find it a serious social problem. – U. Reinsalu (IS), 24.01.2018⁵⁰

⁴⁹ “Te olete justiitsminister, te olete riigiametnik, kes vastutab otseselt vägivalda tõkestamise eest. Nüüd aga olete sattunud väärtuskonflikt. Ma ei räägi siin praegu sellest, kuidas te oma tekste sõnastate ja pärast vabandustega oma sõnu ümber lükkate. Ma väidan, et te püüdsite püsiväärtuselt löigata poliitilist profiiti. Justiitsminister ja kahetsus vägivalda hukkamõistmise pärast – need asjad ei lähe nagu kokku. Kas põhimõtteliselt saab sellisesse väärtuskonflikti sattunud ministrit usaldada või ei saa?” (Jaanson, 2018)

⁵⁰ “Kui minu seisukoht oleks selline, et ma õigustan vägivalda, kui ma väljendaksin kahemõttelist seisukohta vägivalda suhtes või selle suhtes, millised on riigi institutsioonide hoiakud selles asjas, siis

All things considered; it would be perhaps more accurate to view this instance as an example of a political power struggle between the coalition and the opposition. The instigating moment for the scandal was connected to the #MeToo movement in a way, yet to be cynical the entire following proceedings seem like the opposition capitalising on a scandal to remove a minister from his position and with that maybe even topple the government. Because, if the opposition was truly concerned about violence against women, surely, they would have taken this opportunity to raise the issue in following parliamentary sittings, or craft some legislation, allocate more funding to organisations and so forth. As it turned out the way it did, it is very easy to question the true motivations between the vote of no confidence. Of course, while they had the “moral high ground” and probably among those, who tried to remove the Minister from his position, were some, who seriously fight against sexual harassment and violence, this scandal was still not used as a catalyst for change in the current situation of sexual harassment and sexual violence as high-profile cases were in some other countries.

The results of the analysis of parliamentary sittings show that hypothesis 2 – *The political elite had no significant response to the #MeToo movement* – is confirmed. During the period from October 2017 to December 2018 197 sessions were held in the parliament. The result that only 80 (somewhat) relevant statements could be found during this time, indicates that the political elite had no real response to the movement. The media landscape was primed for a substantial political discussion on the topic of sexual harassment and sexual violence in Estonia through the broad media coverage of the movement and the generally positive framing of the issues surrounding it. However, the findings suggest that either other topics were considered to be more salient during this period or there simply was a lack of pressure from the society to do anything. Or, the reason could be tied to the fact that women are underrepresented in the *Riigikogu*, and men do not value the topic enough to spend their political capital on it. Perhaps the only instance of the #MeToo being even slightly significant to Estonian politics, was during

loomulikult ei saaks sellist justiitsministrit õigusriigis usaldada. Ma tegin ühe avalduse. Ma olen selle kontekstist ja ideest kõnelenud ega hakka siin pikalt sellel peatuma. [...] Aga ma tahan veel kord öelda, et võitluses vägivalda tõkestamise nimel olen ma loomulikult ühel pool rindejoont nii teiega kui ka kõigi teiste ausate inimestega, kes peavad seda tõsiseks sotsiaalseks probleemiks ja vägivallaspiraali taaskäivitajaks.” (Reinsalu, 2018).

the Reinsalu scandal, when it served as a backdrop to a political struggle between the parties.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to analyse the response to the #MeToo movement in the Estonian media and political sphere. Two main research questions were posed in the thesis: 1) *How was the #MeToo movement framed in Estonian media* and 2) *How did the political elite respond to the #MeToo movement*. As the theoretical background suggested, social movements that attempt to challenge the status quo surrounding a specific issue, can face negative framing in the media. The protest paradigm claims that that protest movements may be delegitimised and demonised through targeted negative media frames and the public nuisance paradigm claims that protests are seen as bothersome and having no real merit. Furthermore, feminist movement's that challenge gender roles and norms within the patriarchal society can be viewed rather harshly by the media. Hence, the thesis hypothesised that the #MeToo movement would be framed predominantly in a negative manner. The negative framing was expected to manifest itself in diagnostic framing that shifted the cause and blame to things that the victim did to incur the sexual harassment or violence rather than the perpetrator and on the general negative tone of opinion pieces.

The results of the frame analysis conducted on 112 opinion pieces collected from three major Estonian news sources (*Postimees*, *Päevaleht* and *ERR*) that were published during the time period of October 2017 to December 2018, indicated however that the initial hypothesis was false. Overall, a large majority of the opinion pieces were found to be positive towards the movement. Six diagnostic frames were found: victim blaming frame, questionable motivations frame, power dynamics frame, toxic masculinity frame and end of flirtation frame. These frames tried to pin-point the causes for sexual harassment and sexual violence and determine who or what is to blame. The two most common frames (victim-blaming and questionable motivations), for example, indicated that the victims are not inclined to come forward with their stories, as they fear that they are going to be blamed for what happened or that their motivations for coming forward will be under great scrutiny. The power dynamics frame found that positions of power can lead people to take advantage of others and the toxic masculinity frame indicated that strict adherence to stereotypical gender norms by men can engender toxic behaviours such as misogyny.

Lastly, end of flirtation frame, suggested that sexual harassment can arise from miscommunication during flirtation and that the #MeToo movement can entail the end to flirtation as we know it. A combination of prognostic and motivational framing was found in the breaking the silence frame. From a prognostic framing side, it posited that the solution for sexual harassment and violence could be found in speaking up and stopping ignoring the issue. This could help to lift the societal taboo surrounding the issue and get help to those who suffered under sexual harassment or violence. From a motivational framing perspective, victims of such acts were encouraged to come forward and share their stories, as this act was seen as a way to prevent similar situations in the future.

As the #MeToo movement garnered a vast media attention and a high media coverage of certain topics and social movements has been shown to have an impact on political targets, the thesis set out to then analyse the political reaction to the #MeToo movement. To do so frame analysis was conducted on the minutes to the parliamentary sittings. As, the #MeToo movement in Estonia stayed mostly in the social media and mass media sphere and did not expand to street protests or other more visible forms of social movement action repertoires, and the general lack of protest culture and feminist mobilisation in Estonia, the potential political impact of the #MeToo movement was hypothesised to be insignificant. The results of the frame analysis supported this hypothesis. Out of 197 sessions held during the time period, references to #MeToo adjacent topics were found in 13 sittings. A total of 80 individual statements could be identified. The findings show no coherent attempts at framing the issue in a diagnostic, prognostic or motivational way. The only instance of the #MeToo showing a modicum of relevance was during the vote of no confidence of the Minister of Justice Urmas Reinsalu, following his controversial opinion piece.

The thesis is not without its limitations. Firstly, the sample was made out of news articles and opinion pieces published in only three news sources. While the sources are reputable and widely read, a widened sample pool with added sources could have potentially shifted the outcomes. Secondly, the interpretive nature of frame analysis can create challenges for reliability. Finally, the time period selected excluded significant discussions about the Istanbul Convention and the scandal of former Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas, which took place shortly before the time period under analysis and could have changed the final picture. Similarly, after the time period selected, the rise of right-wing politics and new

political scandals surrounding violence against women, could have had an impact on the final findings.

Nevertheless, the importance of the #MeToo movement cannot be underestimated. The campaign reached across the world and received wide-spread coverage in both social and traditional media. Even though in the context of Estonia the movement may have had no political impact, as it did in some other countries, in the cultural sphere it still received a significant reaction. The lack of political reaction does not negate the value of the research. In fact, the systematic analysis of framing of the movement can act as a steppingstone to further research into women's movements in Estonia and how they are framed by the media and the political elites.

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